COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG

15¢

Adventure

JUNE

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

A SOLDIER SALUTES THE UNIFORM

A NOVELETTE BY

GORDON MacCREAGH

A CARADOSSO STORY

by **F. R. BUCKLEY**

LESLIE T. WHITE

AND OTHERS

JUNE

ADVENTURE

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

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C809 — Dainty "Loveknot" Ring with brilliant diamond set in center of bowknot. 14K yellow gold mounting. A remarkable value.

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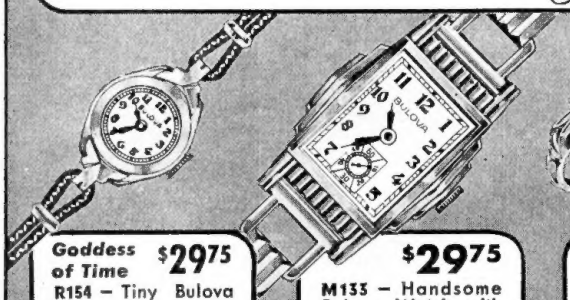

Goddess of Time **$29.75**
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$29.75
M133 — Handsome Bulova Watch with 15 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate case.
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$44
A183/C94—Bridal Set with 6 brilliant diamonds. Rings designed to match in 14K yellow gold.
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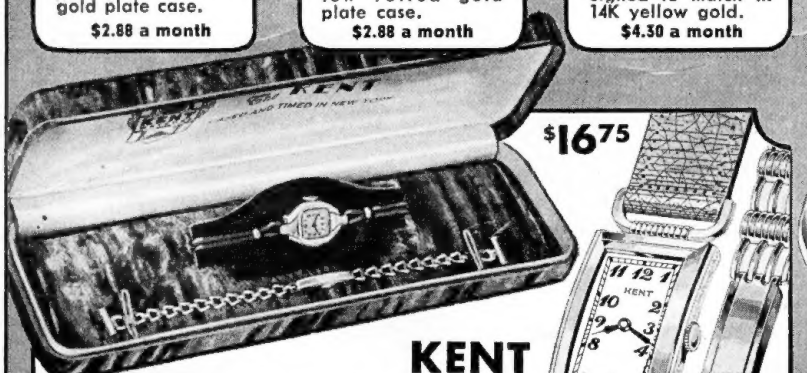

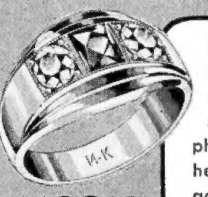

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$39.95
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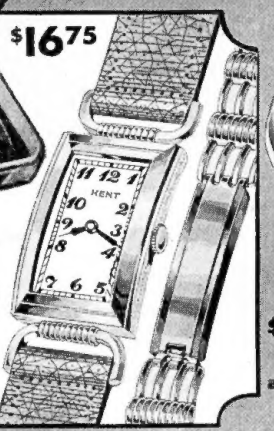

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P160 — Ladies' Watch. **K124** — Man's Watch. Both with 7 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate cases. Both come complete with strap and bracelet.

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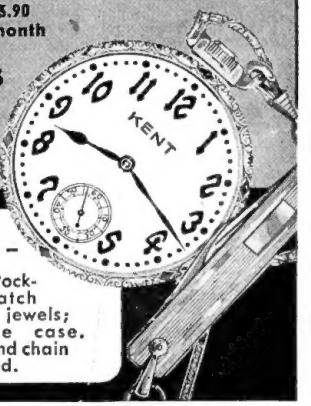

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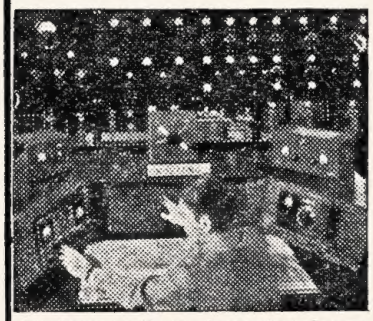
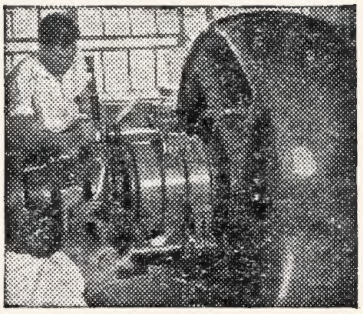


Students in Radio Operating Course get actual experience at control console and broadcast transmitter.



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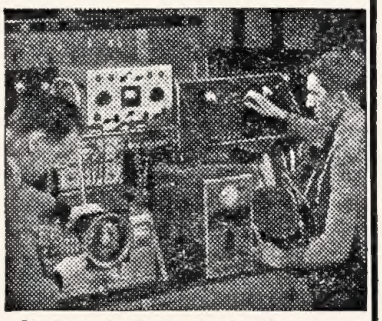

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JULY ISSUE ON SALE JUNE 10th

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Vol. 105, No. 2 for June, 1941 Best of New Stories

There She Blows! . . . . . COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG 10
Captain, mate, five from the *Beaver's* forecastle, and two stove boats—that was the toll of our encounter with the giant killer whale. A slaughter to make many a bloody naval action seem tame indeed.

Destroyer for England . . . . . DURAND KIEFER 35
I'd always been a one-gal sailor and *Winnie*—the U.S.S. *Wingate* to you—was my big heart interest. When we turned her over with forty-nine of her sisters to the British I had to tag along. It was quite a date we had the time she wore her new dress, trimmed with the Union Jack.

The World's Fastest Horseman (a fact story) . . . SHERMAN BAKER 45
François Xavier Aubry was his name and he galloped eight hundred and thirty miles in five days and sixteen hours. Not so fast compared to the speed of Spitfires and Hurricanes, but pretty good going considering that he was blitzed by Indians and outlaws most of the way.

Of Penitence . . . . . F. R. BUCKLEY 48
In which Luigi Caradosso, sometime Captain of the Guard, justifies a peccadillo by relating to the Lord Bishop of Costecaldo, the fearful consequence of too much godliness in an ungodly world.

East of the Williwaw (2nd part of 4) . . . . . LESLIE T. WHITE 60
Harried first by Maté Cocido and his "gulfer" band and then by Nazi sailors seeking to fuel their sea-raiding *Admiral Schneider* in the Straits of Magellan, Jeff Wynn and his cohorts on La Querancia attempt to protect the vast ranch against all comers.

A Soldier Salutes the Uniform (novelette) . . . GORDON MacCREAGH 82
"That bounder," roared the Hon. Monty, "is wearing the old Colchester tie!" From which incautious remark in Nairobi's sedate Hotel Elite, sprang an international incident to solve which required all the iron muscle of Davie Munro, plus the kind offices of a native witch doctor who'd succumbed to the lilt of that Caledonian behemoth's skirling.

The Camp-Fire . . . . . Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 119

Ask Adventure . . . . . Information you can't get elsewhere 8

The Trail Ahead . . . . . News of next month's issue 130

Lost Trails . . . . . Where old paths cross 6

Cover by Stockton Mulford
Headings by Gordon Grant, Hamilton Green, I. B. Hazelton, Don Hewitt and John Clymer
Kenneth S. White, Editor

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Be a RADIO Technician

Many make $30 $40 $50 a week

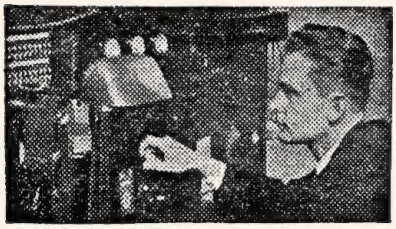
J. E. SMITH, President, National Radio Institute. Established 25 Years.

I Train *Beginners* at Home for Good Spare Time and Full Time Radio Jobs

Lots of fellows who want better jobs are going to read this and never do anything about it. They haven't the stuff in them. They'll just go along through life, always wishing and worrying, becoming smaller, instead of BIGGER MEN. But there are a few of you fellows I REALLY WANT TO HEAR FROM. You're men of ACTION—who say "SHOW ME HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN RADIO; prove to me that YOU'VE HELPED OTHERS TO SUCCESS, and I'll go along with you and put my whole heart into learning."

Here's OPPORTUNITY for Men of Action

I want to tell, and prove to you fellows that I can train you at home to be Radio technicians; that I can help you to cash in on the prosperity Radio is enjoying today. You're the fellows I want to show that hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Defense Orders are giving Radio its biggest boom in years. I want to show you, too, why the use of Radio for home and business purposes will continue to increase; will help prevent the hard bump that many industries will suffer when Defense orders stop coming. I want you to know, too, that Radio Technicians, when drafted for military service are getting in line quickly for better ratings with more pay, more prestige; why some Radio Technicians in the Army and Navy earn up to 6 times a private's base pay. You're the fellows I want to talk to.



Broadcasting Stations employ operators, installation, maintenance men and Radio Technicians in other capacities and pay well.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make $30, $40, $50 a Week

Radio Technicians use their minds as well as their hands. They have to THINK on their jobs. It takes trained minds and trained hands to repair a home or auto Radio set; to operate and maintain a Broadcast or Commercial transmitting station; to install, operate and repair Loudspeaker Systems, Police and Aviation Radio equipment. That's why so many Radio Technicians earn good pay, get good jobs, steady work. That's why, too, a trained Radio Technician has opportunities to run his own full time Radio Service business, or make extra money in spare time by fixing Radio sets from his own home.

Set Servicing pays many Radio Technicians $30, $40, $50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make $5 to $10 extra a week in spare time.

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When you train at home with N. R. I. you get special instruction material to show you how to make extra money quickly. Many students report making extra money fixing Radio sets in spare time within a few months; others tell how they paid for their Courses with extra money made in spare time while learning. N. R. I. Training is not all book work. Practical experiments with Radio parts we supply is a very important part of our Course and gives you valuable experience. A Professional Set Servicing Instrument is included to increase your spare time earnings and to make more money when you begin full time Radio work.

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Hundreds of men who know Radio when they enter military service are going to win specialist ratings in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. These ratings pay up to 6 times a private's or seaman's base pay, in addition to carrying extra rank and prestige! Whether you enlist or wait for conscription—IT'S SMART TO LEARN RADIO—NOW!

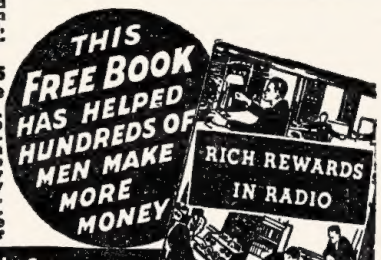
J. E. Smith, President
National Radio Institute
Dept. 1FS9 Washington, D. C.

I Trained These Men

$10 to $20 a Week in Spare Time
I repaired some Radio Sets when I was on my tenth lesson. I really don't see how you can give so much for such a small amount of money. I made $600 in a year and a half, and I have made an average of $10 to $20 a week—just spare time.—JOHN JERRY, 1529 Arapahoe St., Rm. 17, Denver, Colorado

Makes $50 to $60 a Week
I am making between $50 and $60 a week after all expenses are paid, and I am getting all the Radio work I can take care of, thanks to N. R. I.—H. W. SPANGLER, 126½ S. Gay St., Knoxville, Tenn.

Operates Public Address System
I have a position with the Los Angeles Civil Service, operating the Public Address System in the City Hall Council. My salary is $170 a month.—R. H. ROOD, R. 156, City Hall, Los Angeles, Calif.



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Mail me FREE, without obligation, your 64-page book "Rich Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Write plainly.)

AGE.....

NAME.....

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CITY.....STATE.....

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to Lost Trails will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or for any other reason in the judgment of the editorial staff. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Herbert Greenway would like news of his brother or sister, last heard of in Birmingham, England. Please write, R.1., Santa Maria, Calif.

I am trying to locate my father, Frank L. Clark, a U. S. citizen, who married my mother, a Canadian, in Boston, Mass., on Feb. 9, 1901. I was born in Blackville, New Brunswick, Canada. My parents were divorced in 1902 or 1903. In 1915, my mother and stepfather brought me from Katonah, N. Y. to Saskatchewan, where we resided until I myself married a girl from the U. S. Her parents live in Minnesota, and as my own mother lives in Maine, I am anxious to return to the States with my family whom I have taught to regard themselves as U. S. citizens. My three oldest boys are in high school and first year university from where they will eventually go into the military forces (U. S., I hope). Now I must establish my father's U. S. citizenship before I can get home. Hence this request for help. I am unable to locate my father's people who resided in Melrose, Mass. about 1905, I think. Arthur Lester Clark-Marlow, P. O. 5, St. James, Man., Canada.

Henry Gould, last heard of at Ruthven, Iowa, in the fall of 1908. Any information as to his whereabouts would be appreciated by his son, of whose existence he is not aware. Dan F. Townsend, 705 S. Sloan, Compton, Cal.

James P. Brahaney, known as Pat or Irish, was discharged from the Marines at Quantico, in 1938, and I believe lives in the vicinity of Pittsburgh. From 1935 to 1937, he served at the Submarine Base, at Coco Solo, Panama. I have some important news for him and should like very much to hear from him. A. L. Craig, Corporal, USMCR (AO), Reserve Aviation Unit, U.S.N.R. Air Base, Robertson, Mo.

I appeal for help in my 25-year search for my mother, who may be identified as follows: Maiden name, Florence Belle Stanfield, born 1882, at Springfield, Mo., where her people settled from Mobile, Ala. Married William Taylor Lockard, 1897. He died accidentally near Huntington, Ark., 1906. She remarried, name Ed Costello of Texarkana, Ark., about 1907, and divorced him at Muskogee, Okla., about 1914. Last heard from in 1916 while working in a restaurant at Ft. Smith, Ark. One rumor that she went to Omaha, Nebr. could not be traced. May have remarried and be known under another name. Her children are Ethel, Isabel and Carl. Anyone possessing any knowledge of her whereabouts will render a human service by communicating with her married daughter, Mrs. Ethel Lockard Williams, c/o General Delivery, Vinita, Okla.

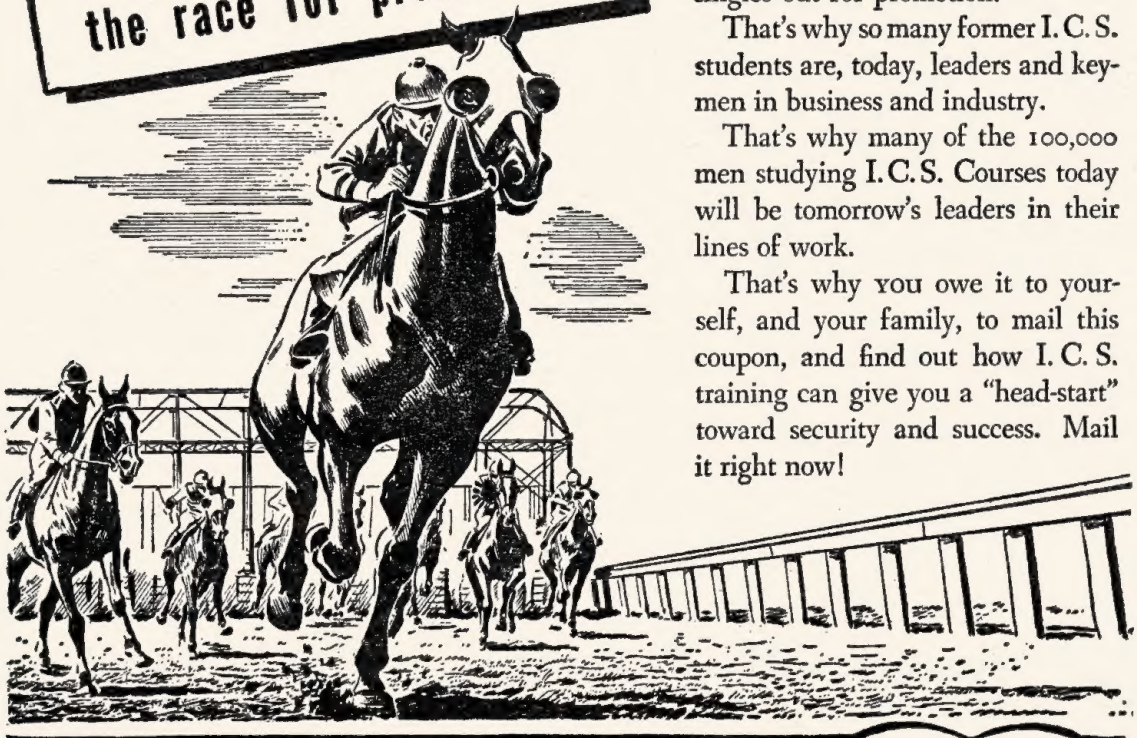
My brother, Fred Irving, originally lived in Rochester, N. Y., and was last heard from in 1914 when he was employed as a brakeman in or near Portland, Ore. In 1911 and 1912, he worked for the government on surveys around Fairbanks, Alaska, and in the winter was with a prospecting party around Fairbanks and Dover. One of his pals forwarded a letter to my address, stating that he had won out on a suit regarding a claim. My brother was 5 feet 11 inches in height, weight, 160 lbs., dark eyes, brown hair, and walked very erect. Anyone knowing his whereabouts, please communicate with Percy Irving, 3021 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, N. Y.

My brother, Richard Peyton Symmes, has been missing since 1918. He was last heard from at Peru, Kans., and was living with Mr. and Mrs. Perry Miley, who were farming in that neighborhood. He was born and raised in Topeka, Kans. His age is 32. His mother's present name is Mrs. May Wyer, and she has tried many ways to locate him, with no success. Harry J. Symmes, c/o Mrs. May Wyer, 933 Paseo, Kansas City, Mo.

Roland Harder, formerly of Co. 'C', 27th Inf., Hawaii, last heard of in Johnsville, Cal. Probably in or near a California mining town. Anyone knowing his whereabouts please communicate with Chas. L. McFadden, 1320 South Carmelina, West Los Angeles, Cal.

(Continued on page 130)

I. C. S. students have a "HEAD-START" in the race for promotion!



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☐ Mfg. of Pulp and Paper
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☐ Practical Telephony
☐ Public Works Engineering
☐ Radio, General
☐ Radio Operating
☐ Radio Servicing
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ R. R. Signalmen's ☐ Refrigeration
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☐ Sheet Metal Work
☐ Steam Electric ☐ Steam Engines
☐ Steam Fitting
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ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

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Request:—A friend and myself are seriously considering building a houseboat next winter. We would like to get the advice of someone experienced in building and running houseboats. If this is out of your line perhaps you can refer us to the proper person.

This is a brief outline of what we have planned so far:

electrical system—32 volt DC windcharger or 110 AC gasoline generator whichever is the most practical without too much cost.

water system—150 gal. storage tank, automatic electric pump, city pres

refrigerator—6.5 cu. feet. electric.
sink and face basin and a shower unit.
gas stove—cooking—"canned" gas.
automatic hot water heater.
wood and coal heating stove.
water or chemical toilet.
approximately twenty electrical outlets.

We have planned to have a scow 14 x 30 feet with a house 14 x 20 feet and two rooms—4 bunks in the living room and the other room the kitchenette.

We figured the whole shooting match to weigh over 19,000 pounds—10 tons. (Laugh if you want—we did when we found out what we had.)

We just wanted *all* the conveniences.

Also we would like to be able to put a couple of outboards on back and go places. We would park it on Cayuga Lake which has access to the N.Y. State Barge canal and the Hudson River And the Great Lakes.

If you could give us a few important "musts" and "don'ts" we would appreciate it very greatly. —James Z. Nicholls
114 Overlook Rd,
Ithaca, N. Y.

Reply by Raymond S. Spears:—Without attacking the ideas of convenience, it seems to me your houseboat, with its suggestion of going on cruises, needs further investigation. A boat should be three or four times as long as it is wide, if you are to drive it by wind or sail, or outboard, inboard or towboat. A genuine home-comfort such as you propose doesn't make for good navigation, and on so large a craft 5 foot decks on the ends don't give much room for working sweeps (if any), or handling the outboard, ropes for anchoring and mooring.

I think for the 14 ft. width, a length of nearly 40-feet would be better than 30, and 45 better yet.

How would you distribute your weight? And what model hull would you use, scow or canal boat or sharp bow and rounded stern, rounded bottom?

One suggestion would be to build a model—14 inches by 30—or some other proportions—after examining the books on boats in one of your excellent city or University libraries.

A book about houseboats was printed by Forest & Stream years ago. You get a copy through a 2nd hand book store, or if not in your Ithaca libraries have a library borrow a copy from the New York Library for your examination.

I wonder about all that electric equip-

(Continued on page 122)

"Give Me Your Measure Let Me Prove I Can Make You a NEW MAN!"

I DON'T care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add SOLID MUSCLE to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—is all the time I ask of you! And there's no cost if I fail.

I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system INSIDE and OUTSIDE! I can add inches to your chest, give you a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

I know, myself, what it means to have the kind of body that people pity! Of course, you wouldn't know it to look at me now, but I was once a skinny weakling who weighed only 97 lbs. I was ashamed to strip for sports or undress for a swim. I was such a poor specimen of physical development that I was constantly self-conscious and embarrassed. And I felt only HALF-ALIVE.

Then I discovered *"Dynamic Tension."* It gave me a body that won for me the title "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

When I say I can make you over into a man of giant power and energy, I know what I'm talking about. I've seen my new system, *"Dynamic Tension,"* transform hundreds of weak, puny men into Atlas Champions.

What Only 15 Minutes a Day Can Do for You

Do you want big, broad shoulders — a fine, powerful chest—biceps like steel—arms and legs rippling with muscular strength — a stomach ridged with bands of sinewy muscle—and a build you can be proud of? Then just give me the opportunity to prove that *"Dynamic Tension"* is what you need.

No "ifs," "ands," or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, powerful muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, pepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, best jobs, etc.? Then write for details about *"Dynamic Tension"* and learn how I can make you a healthy, confident, powerful HE-MAN.

"Dynamic Tension" is an entirely NATURAL method. Only 15 minutes of your spare time daily is enough to show amazing results—and it's actually fun! *"Dynamic Tension"* does the work.

CHARLES ATLAS
Holder of title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

FREE BOOK "Everlasting Health and Strength"

Mail the coupon right now for full details and I'll send you my illustrated book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." Tells all about my *"Dynamic Tension"* method. Shows actual photos of men I've made into Atlas Champions. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Mail the coupon to me personally. CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 83F, 115 East 23rd St., New York, N. Y.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 83F,
115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of *"Dynamic Tension"* will help make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name.....
(Please print or write plainly.)

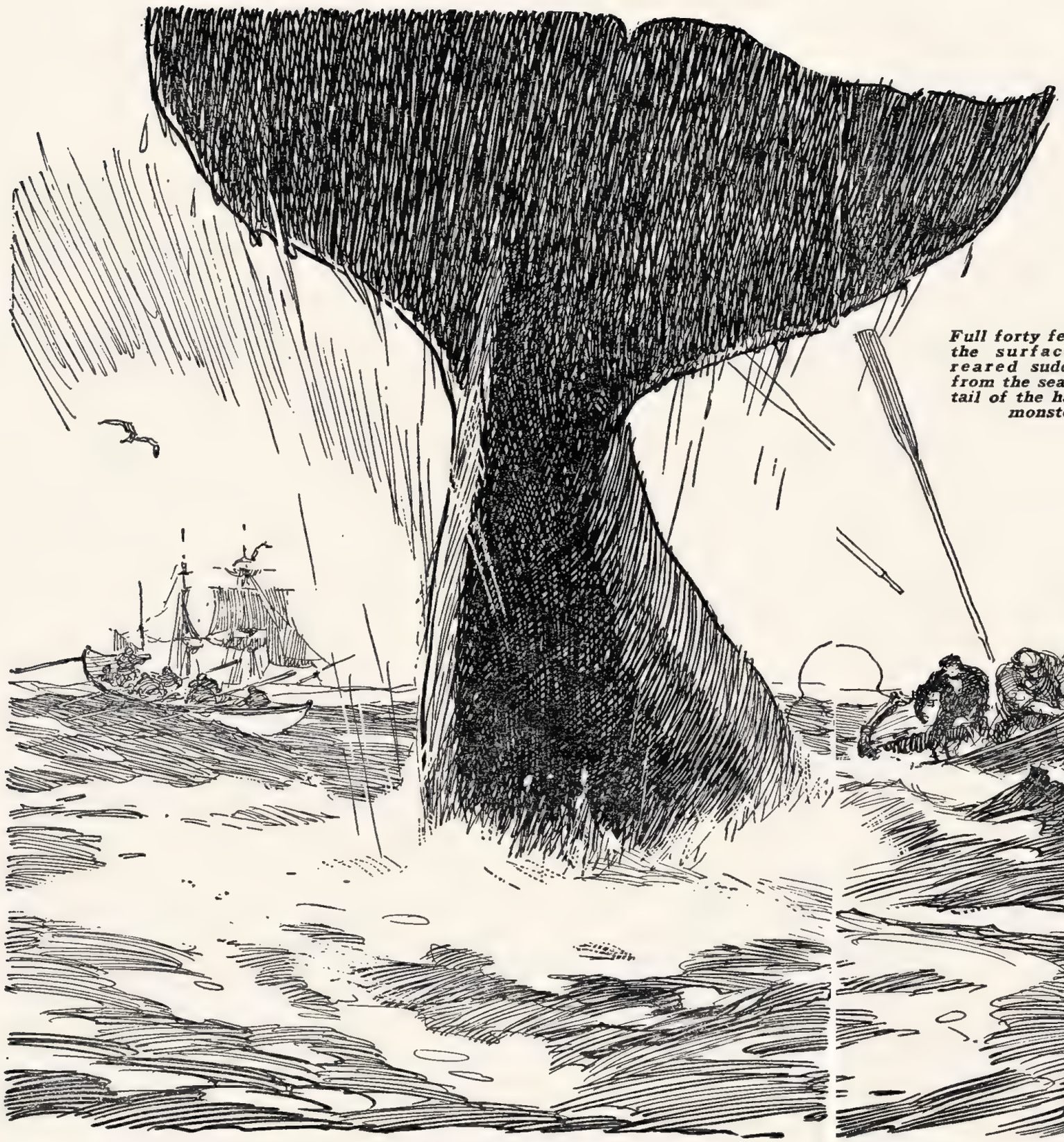
Address.....

City..... State.....

THERE SHE BLOWS!

By COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG

TO ITS young men, our island of Nantucket offers but two alternatives in life—they may go awhaling, or (should that not suit them) they may go westward beyond the Alleghanies to the wilderness of the Ohio, and having there first hacked out of the virgin forest a few acres of cleared land for themselves, thereafter they may battle with savage Indians to see which of the twain, red man or white, shall enjoy the fruits of their agricultural efforts.



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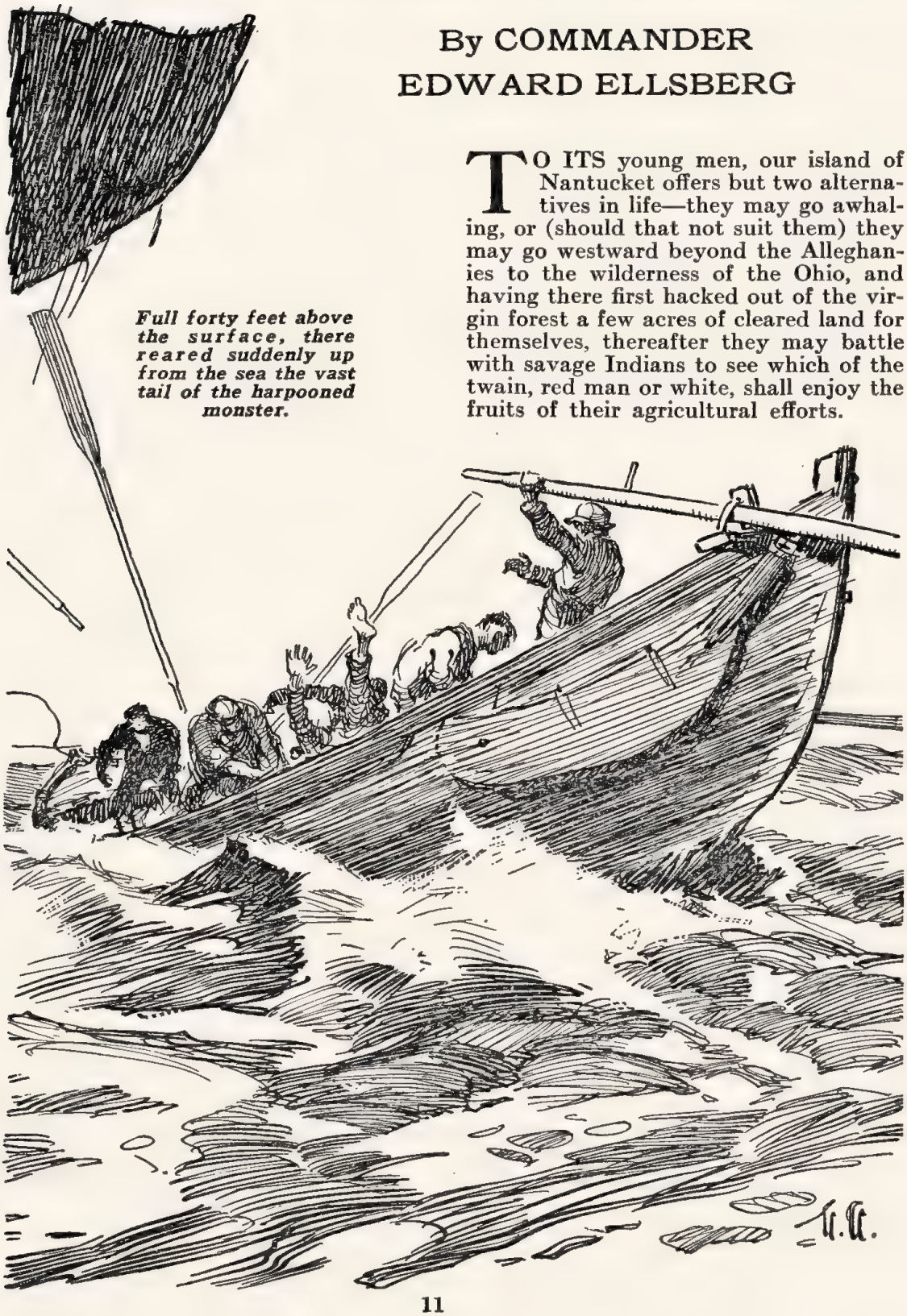

Full forty feet above the surface, there reared suddenly up from the sea the vast tail of the harpooned monster.

However, there being but few trees on our island, it happens that none of us has been in his youth afforded adequate opportunity to become skilled with an axe. And Nature, furthermore, having made Nantucket mainly of sand, neither have we here ever had fair incentive to improve our skill in agriculture. For the which good reasons, being thereby much handicapped in early training and unsuited as pioneers to the unexplored wilds of our frontier, few of us Nantucketers have ever been inclined to imitate the adventurous youth amongst our neighbors of Virginia or New York in exploiting the possibilities of becoming, perchance, landed proprietors at the expense of some of Pontiac's painted warriors.

It will be plain then that I, Thomas Folger, had but Hobson's choice when the death of my father forced upon my young shoulders the burden of bestirring myself immediately to earn a livelihood.

I went awhaling.

Despite only sixteen years I was already a lanky youth approaching six feet and promising shortly to go far beyond that height. Captain Coffin of the *Beaver* had known my father well and understood my situation. A little persuasion and he agreed to let me ship with him, and for the two hundredth lay besides.

The *Beaver* was a noble vessel, of full two hundred and forty tons, the largest whaler of any owned in Nantucket, which meant of course, the largest of any in the entire world. Bluff in the bows, full in the waist, her three masts (each topped off by the crow's nest which marked her as a spouter) set squarely perpendicular to her waterline with none of that rake aft which is supposed to denote speed.

Obviously, the *Beaver* as a vessel was certainly no beauty. But in her every line she bespoke her sole purpose —to provide within her stout hull stowage for the maximum number of casks of sperm oil that her buoyancy might safely sustain, with little regard either to appearance, comfort, or speed, qualities which in a whaler earned not a farthing for her owners.

SLOWLY with the outgoing tide and her topsails aback before a light southerly breeze, the *Beaver* fell away from Straight Wharf. From my station on the main yard ready to loose sail at the word, with bare toes desperately clutching the footrope and both hands clinging for dear life to the yardarm, I looked down across the widening gap of eddying water between ship and dock at the multitude of our townsmen waving hats and kerchiefs, wishing us godspeed and "Greasy luck!" from the fading land.

Then, presently, the sea of faces on the wharf merged into a vast indistinguishable blur as gently we drifted out past Brant Point and across the sand bar to clear the harbor. As I twisted my toes about the footrope, my eyes wandered from the surging waters beneath me on the end of that main yard protruding far outboard beyond the bulwarks, to the stolid seaman on the other end of the yard who was to be my companion in the task of loosing the mainsail. Furtively I looked him over, wondering if he knew any more about the job than I, and in startled amazement noted he was unquestionably an Indian! My heart sank. With an untutored savage on one end of the main yard and a raw landlubber on the other, God help the *Beaver* when the order came, as it did in another moment from the quarterdeck below as Jared Macy, the mate, roared out: "Make sail! Loose the courses!"

The next few minutes on the *Beaver* were for me only a bedlam of hoarsely bawled out orders from the poop, the whining of sheets and braces running through a multitude of creaking blocks as fore and aft, alow and aloft on every mast the heavy canvas fell from the yards and the yards themselves were braced sharply over to put us on the starboard tack. How I managed even to stay on the swinging yard as it slewed sharply forward when the mainsail filled beneath me I hardly know. And I am quite certain I did nothing useful on it other than to avoid crashing to the deck when the canvas suddenly bellied out below me, everything needful on that yard being done to my surprise by the

nimble Indian inboard me who (realizing apparently my helpless plight) slid across on the footrope to loose the lashings on my end of the sail as well as on his, during the which I clung whitefaced to the erratically swaying spar when the *Beaver* began to roll to the incoming swells.

On deck again at last with the ship underway outward bound, I made myself as inconspicuous as possible in the lee of the mainmast the while under the mate's eye the rest of the crew scurried about the deck in response to a stream of (to me) meaningless orders, setting taut innumerable lines on the which I dared not lay a hand for fear of heaving on the wrong one and exposing myself to derision (and perhaps worse) for the helpless landlubber that I was. On any other type of vessel, this shirking of mine would hardly have been permitted, but on a whaler, overmanned by the need of carrying so many men for her whaleboat crews, there was no lack of hands on the sheets and braces, and Jared Macy, knowing well enough my situation, paid little attention to me just then.

As the afternoon drew along, and close hauled on the starboard tack we rounded Great Point and stood to the southward in a fresh breeze, the low hills of Nantucket gradually sank into the sea astern of us. We were underway.

MY STRANGE companion on the main yard when getting underway I soon enough learned was a Gay Header, an Indian from the nearby island of Marthas Vineyard, rejoicing in the Biblical appellation of Anthony Jeremiah, though in no spiritual way recalling that Hebrew prophet whose name he bore. For Red Jerry (as he was familiarly denominated by his mates) was a seaman *par excellence,* and he it was who took me in hand to initiate me into the mysteries of brails and braces, halliards and topping lifts, sheets and tacks, stunsails and staysails, shrouds and spars, and all the innumerable lines, whether in the standing or running rigging, required in the management of the top hamper which drove our lumbering hull under straining canvas along through the foaming seas.

I marvel yet at the adaptability of man, for this red savage (and savage he was inwardly) was as much at home in the maze of tarred rigging with which civilization had bedizened the *Beaver,* as ever his painted Narragansett ancestors were amidst the trackless forests of our primeval New England. A good seaman was Red Jerry to whom I owe much thanks, for no father could ever have shown more genuine solicitude than he in imparting to a lubberly boy his knowledge of seamanship. From that first instant when Red Jerry saw me petrified on the yard arm and loosed sail for me, I somehow became his protégé.

There was little of the noble savage and nothing at all reminiscent of the forest about Red Jerry. Bronzed like all his Indian brothers, but with an odd patina to his coppery complexion with which the years of facing salt spray in driving hurricanes and speeding whaleboats had overlaid his natural red, I never saw another Indian like him. Not quite so tall as I, he had nevertheless a pair of brawny shoulders and a barrel chest bespeaking amazing strength in his arms. If the resulting physique, giving him a squat appearance, meets not the popular conception of what an Indian warrior should be for gliding like a shadow noiselessly through the forests after venison or the scalps of his enemies,

Editor's Note:—*For the past two years Commander Ellsberg has been at work on a long historical novel based on the life of our country's greatest naval hero, John Paul Jones. "Captain Paul" is the title it will bear when it appears in book form late this spring under the Dodd, Mead imprint. It is the Literary Guild selection for June. We wish time and space had permitted us to publish this distinguished piece of work as a serial—all 250,000 words of it—but we had to be content with the long excerpt from it which follows. The novel is narrated in the first person by an ex-Nantucket whaleman who sailed and fought with Jones. The account of the whale chase which follows occurs in the novel just prior to the narrator's meeting with "Captain Paul."*

at least it suited marvellously the pursuit in which Red Jerry found himself. Not any love of the sea had brought this savage aboard the *Beaver,* but simply that wild love of the chase which had come down to him through endless Indian generations. Sequestered now in filthy villages from the whites who had ravished them of their hunting grounds, his Narragansett brethren might be content to eke out for themselves a miserable existence by basket weaving, and the like futile handicrafts, but not Red Jerry.

That magnificent set of arms and shoulders with which Nature had endowed him, opened for him a vista of the chase to dwarf the puny game his primogenitors had tracked, and of that fact my prudent Quaker neighbors on Nantucket, like the keen merchants they were, had duly taken note. For Red Jerry was in their employ a harpooner, the wide oceans his hunting ground, the largest animal that ever breathed on land or sea his prey, and the savage delight with which Red Jerry, poised in the bow of a whaleboat, flung his harpoon bespoke the pure joy of the wild hunter in the chase, undiluted with any mercenary considerations as to how many barrels of sperm oil might be boiled in the try-pots out of the blubber stripped from the huge victims of his barbed harpoon.

Our captain, Hezekiah Coffin, I saw next to nothing of as the *Beaver* day after day ploughed southward under full sail. To me, the three mates were the Lords of creation, according to whose whims life proceeded. Of these Jared Macy was first, or as custom has it, *the* mate, with Owen Swain and Jedidah Mayhew second and third respectively. Quakers all, it startled me to note, once the anchor was aweigh and they had shipped their seagoing faces, how little they resembled the staid Quakers I had taken them for amongst their friends and families in sober, God-fearing Nantucket.

Jared Macy I came to know best. Lean, sharp featured, hard of face and hard of heart, as the mate he had first choice of harpooners for his boat and he chose Red Jerry. A harpooner (dubbed also a boat-steerer) is himself something of an officer aboard a spouter, living and messing aft with the mates, and relied on by the mate whose boat he heads in the chase, and consequently influential with that mate. As a result apparently of Red Jerry's suggestion, I found myself assigned also to the mate's boat but to my dismay appointed by that worthy (deceived no doubt by my lanky frame) to pull the stroke oar in his whaleboat. For the moment, that meant little, as we were not soon likely to lower for any whales, but I looked with much foreboding to the time when directly under the mate's eye as he manned the steering oar, I must justify my size in setting the stroke as we drove headlong after our first whale.

UNDER harsh discipline and the harder work that went with it, my youthful form toughened rapidly as we went south. Watch and watch during the night, four hours on, four hours off, with the broken sleep resulting therefrom, and all hands on deck during the day with never a moment free to catch up on lost slumber, will either toughen a body or very quickly kill him. Each night of my first week when my watch ended, as I wearily dragged my tortured limbs into my bunk, hands blistered and raw from hauling on briny lines, every joint aching from the back breaking toil of handling soaked canvas aloft or muling stores up from the hold, I bemoaned the fate which had determined me to become a sailor.

But after that week, as my hands grew somewhat calloused, my muscles somewhat hardened, and most of all, as my mind absorbed the tricks of the trade in which I found myself and rapidly applied that knowledge to save my back, with the resilience of youth I began to take a keener interest in the real object of our voyage and to consider how, if I was to be a whaler, I might soonest rise in that profession at least to the dignity of harpooner if not indeed to that of officer.

Simple arithmetic made the need of that quite evident, even had I been lacking otherwise wholly in ambition. We should, with reasonable luck, after three

years come home in the *Beaver* with 2400 barrels of oil, worth some thirty shillings to the barrel. Of that cargo, since I had the two-hundredth lay, my share would be 12 barrels, or £18 for my three years work, surely no munificent reward for the racking toil and the hard words I had endured meanwhile, let alone the dangers I had yet to face in gaining it.

But could I ever rise to the dignity of harpooner, then indeed my situation would improve mightily. For on the skill and recklessness of the harpooners rested heavily the success of our voyage, and to encourage the exercise of those qualities the lay of the harpooners was made alluringly large—the twentieth lay, ten times what I as humble seaman was to receive, being their reward. The twentieth lay! One hundred and twenty barrels of sperm oil, should we have greasy luck, the gain of each harpooner! That was even more than allotted the three mates, who drew but a twenty-fifth, thirty-fifth, and fifty-fifth lay respectively.

In the dreary night watches as the waves foamed up about the *Beaver's* bluff forefoot and eddied aft in the darkness along her heeled-down lee rail, imaginatively I fingered the rough wood shaft of Red Jerry's harpoon and pictured myself flinging it unerringly into the glistening backs of endless spouting whales with never a miss and my twentieth lay swelling steadily as from the try-pots the oil poured down into the casks below in the hold, to fill them till not another drop of sperm oil could we stow anywhere aboard the overladen *Beaver,* not even in the galley kettles or in the emptied vials of the ship's medicine chest.

Affectionately I fondled that dream. As rapidly as possible, I must rise to harpooner. I was already tall and might well expect at my age quickly to add even a few more inches to my stature. That would give me a leverage for hurling a harpoon that might well compensate for the fact that never could I hope to match the deep-chested breadth of shoulders that distinguished Red Jerry.

On the heaving deck of the spouter, hammering along close hauled through head seas in the darkness, in all the confidence of my sixteen years, I determined to concentrate on becoming a harpooner. And on the twentieth lay that went with it.

Eight bells, sharp and clear, echoed metallically in pairs through the night. The midwatch was over at last. Down the forecastle hatch echoed the hoarse cry: "On deck all the starbowlines! Shake a leg below!"

Thankfully as the new watch tumbled up and relieved us, I stumbled below to the faintly lighted forecastle, tossed aside my spray-soaked jacket, and with my bared feet still as wet as when they left the deck, clambered hurriedly up into my stuffy bunk in the topmost tier and rolled in. Instantly harpoons, lays and all were forgotten. Sleep, blessed sleep, was all that mattered to me. Truly is the seaman's vision of Paradise that spot where he may have all night in, with never an ungentle voice bursting raucously out to summon him on deck for the next watch.

WE approached the Cape Verde Islands, a favorite whaling ground. Carefully each whaleboat was fitted out for its task, and the amount of gear stowed into those boats surprised me. Five oars, of course, of varying lengths, and as many paddles; a long steering oar; mast and sail; two harpoons and two lances; several wood drags; a small cask of fresh water and another of hard biscuit; a boat box; a short handled blubber spade; and most prominent of all objects in the boat, looking like a vast cheese in a tub, the harpoon line.

In fascination I watched Red Jerry coil down that harpoon line into the tub of our boat. Two hundred fathoms in length, almost two inches in circumference, spun of the finest golden brown hemp, strong enough to sustain a three ton strain, was that whale line. I ran one end up the rigging to the masthead, through a block there, and down again to the deck alongside the line-tub before Red Jerry deigned to begin the coiling, so finical was he that he have a long fair lead of line free of all twists, turns, or possible kinks.

The coiling commenced. Into the bottom of that three foot in diameter wooden tub, Red Jerry laid down a smooth spiral layer of hemp like a huge concentric scroll till the tight coils covered the entire base, then continued to the next layer above. All the time as we hauled down line from the masthead block, he delicately fingered it in his calloused hands for the slightest indication of any twist or turn in the lay of the hempen strands which might, when it uncoiled from the tub, cause it to kink or run out foul in tangled coils.

I needed but little imagination to justify the extreme pains taken by Red Jerry in coiling those hempen turns down upon each other till the tub was filled to the top with the whole two hundred fathom length of hemp, a most meticulously built up layer cake. For that line, led from the tub aft to the loggerhead in the stern of our whaleboat, and then forward over the oars between the oarsmen to the bow chock where the outboard end of the line was attached to the harpoon, would go singing out like unleashed lightning should the whale sound when it was struck and any foul turn, if the line ran not out true, might well loop itself about an arm, a leg, or a neck to yank the unlucky possessor thereof overboard into the depths after the sounding whale, ere he had any knowledge of what was happening to him, let alone the slightest opportunity to do anything to free himself of the deadly coil.

No, neither I nor Manuel Sylvia nor Obed Hussey nor Peleg Coleman (the other three members of that boat's crew) feeding the line carefully along to Red Jerry to be coiled down, begrudged him any second of the long hours he thought proper for the completion of his all-important task.

It was past our necks, as we sat at the oars, that twisted hemp was going to sing, once the harpoon was darted. Naturally we took the liveliest interest in the skill and care with which it was flaked down.

With all on deck ready, boats stowed, boat falls overhauled and clear for running out from the clumsy wooden davits secured to our bulwarks, the three boat crews told off, nothing needful remained now for the commencement of our labors except the whales.

It must not be believed that lack of whales was due to any laxity on Captain Coffin's part in keeping a weather eye out for any sign of them. Hardly had we cleared Nantucket Shoals when the *Beaver's* mastheads were manned, and every daylight hour from then on at both fore and main topgallant crosstrees a seaman was perched, scanning the waves out to the far horizon for the thin crested spout of vapor that denoted a blowing whale.

FORTUNATELY for me, my own first watch at the masthead came not until we were some two weeks out, and I had had opportunity to gain both some sea legs and some confidence aloft or I might well never have survived it.

To any landsman, even the deck of a vessel rolling and heaving as she breasts the seas and heels to the winds, is an unsubstantial footing, like enough to make him squeamish. What then must be the sensation, over a hundred feet above the waves, perched only on the thin crosstrees, clutching for support only the trifling royal mast behind, with every slightest motion of the hull magnified by the tremendous leverage of practically the whole length of swaying mast, swinging like a huge inverted pendulum from the ship below?

There may or may not have been whales spouting about the while I stood my first masthead. I was in no way interested in them. With my bared feet pressed firmly down on the fore topgallant crosstrees, my back solidly jammed against that tapering timber behind me called the royal mast, and my two hands clutched in a death grip behind my back about that slippery stick, my sole concern as I swayed there suspended between sky and sea with my jacket streaming in the breeze, was to hang on. Somehow I had managed before to escape seasickness down on deck, but the motion far aloft was too much for me and my stomach immediately revolted at such treatment. A few sharp rolls to leeward and a sudden upward heave as

the *Beaver's* forefoot lifted to a wave, set my mouth awatering unpleasantly. Hardly was I fully conscious of that when the ensuing dizzy drop into the following trough of the sea brought on catastrophe. Without even a premonitory gulp, my outraged stomach wholeheartedly disgorged its contents, which as best I might I spewed to leeward, the while in my weakened state I strove to maintain my perch.

Completely miserable, from then on I clung to the mast behind me, fearful on each roll of losing my grip and being catapulted off to go hurtling down a hundred feet past bellying sails into the foaming seas below. But even retching proved no relief, for the motion of that lofty masthead continuing unabated, it soon seemed my stomach itself was striving desperately with each plunge of our hull to rise up in my throat and separate itself from my tortured body.

Thoroughly sick physically, thoroughly terrified mentally, gulping and gagging I weaved erratically athwartships and up and down through vast arcs of space with every twist of that swaying mast. Had all the whales in creation spouted round about the *Beaver* then, my glazed eyes and terrified brain would have taken not the slightest note of them.

Befouled by my own retchings and sick from the odors thereof, with mouth soured and teeth set on edge from the passage upwards of half-digested food, with watering eyes and a greenish hue suffusing my face, I lay down from aloft at the end of my first masthead watch as woebegone an object as may possibly be imagined, heedless completely of any desire save to crawl immediately into my bunk, there, should God be merciful to me, to die as speedily as might be.

But such is the heartlessness with which such suffering is regarded aboard ship that four hours later, when next the watch was called, I was callously dragged from my bunk by the seaman I was to relieve, to stagger feebly on deck, there when I unwittingly passed to windward of Jared Macy, promptly to be soused with a bucket of salt water by the mate whose nostrils were no doubt, grossly offended by my aroma, and rudely admonished: "Keep well to leeward when ye pass me, ye stinking pig, or next time I'll heave thee overboard!"

Gasping and choking from the stinging water, wan and wretched, I slid feebly down the inclined deck to the *Beaver's* lee rail to hang across it with the eddying water seething past but a few feet beneath me, heaving up my very insides in one agonizing spasm of retching after another.

After which I forlornly staggered from one task to another, between involuntary dashes to the rail, until at last I could once again creep into my bunk, firmly resolved that should I ever live to see the shore again—any shore—nothing I knew could tempt me again aboard a vessel.

THROUGH somewhat fairer weather, we drove along the following week so that I recuperated amazingly, and (though salt water is no great cleanser and fresh water was not to be had) I managed by long continued scrubbing to restore my body and my clothing to some degree of cleanliness.

The *Beaver's* deck upon the seventh day took on more animation. I turned out with my watch to find the whole after guard-mates, harpooners, and even, wonder of wonders, Captain Coffin, on deck before me, all sniffing the breeze eagerly.

"Mastheads, there! There's whales about!" sang out Captain Coffin, tilting his head far back. "Look alive! A pound of tobacco for the first man sights a blow!"

Whales about? A little apprehensively I hastily scanned the sea. The breeze was moderate; the waves, sparkling beneath the sun, crested here and there with a little foam; the *Beaver* butting along at perhaps six knots as usual. All in all, except that the weather was better than any we had yet had, I could see no difference from any other day when we had seen no whales, and certainly there were no spouts anywhere visible.

Whether the experienced sense of smell of our veteran whalers really detected anything, or whether between our

position and the sea conditions their experience indicated the probability of seeing spouts thereabouts, I know not. But there could be no doubt they all believed action imminent, for Red Jerry and the other harpooners were lovingly honing the barbed heads of their harpoons to a razor edge. And nearby them, similarly engaged, Jared Macy and the second and third mates were whetting the heart shaped points of their long lances, those slender iron probes intended, once a fish is fastened to with a harpoon, to let the life out of the whale by repeated thrusts through blubber and body into his vitals.

Our weapons having been sharpened to everyone's satisfaction, into each boat they went, two harpoons resting handily in a forked crotch protruding over every whaleboat's starboard bow, with the wicked looking points of the lances close beside on the opposite bow.

Still nothing was reported from aloft, but nevertheless, as if sure of seeing something soon, the skipper kept on with his preparations. Once the boats were lowered, there would be but few men left aboard to handle ship—only the captain, the cooper, and the cook—and accordingly we briskly shortened sails. The stunsails, which in the light breeze we had set, giving us the appearance of a huge bird with wings spread wide skimming just above the waves, were struck, the stunsail booms run in and secured. Up went the courses, to be triced swiftly to the lower yards; down came the flying jibs; on fore and main the topgallant sails were furled (which also gave those at the mastheads a clearer view all about); and in a brief time under topsails, spanker on the mizzen, and jib alone at much reduced speed the bluff-bowed *Beaver* plowed along.

For the first time in my experience during any daylight hours, once sail was reduced and the topmen all back on deck, we were not greeted by the harsh call: "Turn to! Scrub down!"

Instead, from aft where Hezekiah Coffin stood with his broad-brimmed hat shielding his wide sheep-like face, staring off to the eastward into the sun on our larboard bow looking for the anticipated spouts, came subtle bribery.

"A golden guinea to the man on deck who sings out for a blow ere the mastheads cry it! 'Tis his, provided only that we take the whale!"

A golden guinea! I caught my breath. That was more than the part of my lay for a whole month's work might bring me. Instantly I sprang into the lower fore shrouds to scan the waves for any puff of vapor. Nor was I alone. Every seaman, including even the cook and the cooper, followed suit to plaster the shrouds with sailors clinging like monkeys to the lower rigging, eagerly searching for spouts. Only the mates, the helmsman, and the harpooners took no part.

SO FOR some hours we sailed on in silence, sighting nothing save an occasional crest breaking here and there to leave a little patch of white foam on the blue sea. At last the cook, grumbling audibly that that guinea would never be his, dropped off the main shrouds to the deck, and disappeared into the galley. He had his meals to get, spouts or no. Among the others, straining eyes began to weary and to blink, under the glare of the sun reflected back from the sea, and attention began to wander, though no man left his perch.

But my eyes were young and I had faith that they were keener than any others aboard, enough so perhaps to offset even the advantage height gave those at the mastheads in range of vision. So with undiminished vigor, sector by sector in order, time and again, endlessly I searched out to the very horizon the vast circle of the heaving seas surrounding us.

A faint iridescence glimmering an instant among the distant waves on our lee quarter caught my eye. For many a man on the *Beaver* it would have been better had my eyes been duller that day and missed that glint, for no one else alow or aloft saw it, and with the ship steadily drawing away from it, would ever have seen it. But there it was, an instant's glitter topping the far off crests, and then nothing. With eyes riveted on that spot, afraid almost to breathe, I waited some few seconds, to see then a

thin stream of vapor rise slightly above the waves, spread like a nebulous umbrella, fade.

"There she blows!" I sang out, almost splitting my throat that no one should get ahead of me in my claim to that guinea. "She blows, she b-l-o-w-s!" Ecstatically to the last breath of air in my lungs I dragged out that "blows" as once again I saw the cresting spout rise up. Our first spout, and I had first sung out for it! "There on the lee quarter! There she blows!"

Instantly the silent *Beaver* came alive, but ere the men clustered in the rigging with me could scramble down, from the quarterdeck came a roar from the skipper.

"Hard up with the helm!" and then, "Man the braces, Mr. Macy! Stand by to wear!" after which Captain Coffin, shedding all his dignity, with surprising agility came rushing forward, coattails flying, to scramble up the foreshrouds beside me, peering off the larboard quarter.

"How far, lad?" he breathed hoarsely.

"Perhaps five miles, sir!" I estimated hastily. "There, again! Near the horizon, broad off the lee quarter!"

But already the lumbering *Beaver* was beginning to pay off to leeward as the helmsman spun his wheel and on deck under the mate's sharp orders, the laboring crew hastily slacked away on the lee sheets and braces of our canvas and hove taut on the windward ones, so that gradually the spouts began to haul forward along our larboard beam.

"Five miles?" Captain Coffin, who had been shading his eyes, straining for a sight of what I saw, dropped his hand. "Too far for my eyes without a glass." Still clutching the ratlines, he lifted his shaggy head.

"Mastheads, there!" he bellowed. "D'ye make it out yet?"

But from both mastheads came the same response,

"Nary a blow, Cap'n!"

That with the ship now swinging, the lookouts should not pick up amongst the waste of waves those tiny far off spouts which they had not previously spotted, was not to me surprising, but it made the captain furious.

"Down from aloft, ye lubbers!" shrieked the captain. "Lookouts, indeed! Thou'rt both blinder than bats! Down on deck, where at least thy carcasses may serve to heave on the sheets!" Hezekiah Coffin paused a moment for breath the while he observed his order was obeyed, then lowered his massive head and in a much kindlier tone, said to me: "Thou hast the best eyes on the ship, lad, and the wit to use them too, I see. Thou'lt make a whaler soon. Up to the masthead with thee now, and con ship for those spouts as we come about!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" In another second I was skimming up the ratlines to the foretop, there to disregard the lubber's hole, swarm agilely over the outer edge of that platform, and go racing up the topmast shrouds, my heart aflame under the skipper's praise. I literally shot up the swaying ladder to the topgallant masthead, wasting hardly a second to get a grip on the shrouds there before I was searching the sea again, off the larboard beam now, for I judged we had swung off that much from the wind since starting to come about.

From that elevation as against my previous post, I had little difficulty in picking up the spouts. Once again I raised the cry. "There she blows! Broad off the larboard beam!" As regularly as clockwork, every ten seconds that far off fountain sprayed amongst the waves.

BELOW me the yards swayed smartly over as our stern came up into the wind, the jib fluttered over to starboard, and the crew below set taut the sheets and braces to keep the *Beaver* off before the wind on our larboard quarter, headed fairly for those spouts, which in accordance with my directions shouted from the masthead, Captain Coffin soon had lined up dead over our jib-boom. But hardly had the *Beaver* steadied on her new course when over the spot where that fountain had been playing, there reared suddenly up some thirty feet above the sea, a glistening tapered tail. I saw a pair of wide black flukes wave gracefully a moment against the horizon, and then swiftly they sank vertically

from my sight. The spouting ceased, of course.

Immediately from on deck, where dead ahead of us this sudden apparition was instantly spotted, there came up to me in a rough chorus the cry, "There goes flukes!"

The whale had sounded.

For some sixty minutes, I knew, that whale would stay below and we should see no more of him. Only a disturbed patch of white water still nearly five miles off marked his vanishing. How near to that spot he would rise no one could tell.

Shortly the cooper, crabbed Zenas Joy, more of a craftsman than a seaman, came toiling up the shrouds to relieve me at the masthead, now that the position of that whale was well established. Disdaining the slow descent on the shrouds, down the royal backstay with legs wound tightly about it to brake my speed somewhat, I dropped like a plummet to the deck, all eagerness to be promptly on hand for my place in the bow boat, though I might have saved myself the burned palms on my hands and the tarred streak on my trousers that swift descent left me with. Not for an hour could we hope for another sight of spouts, and we needed all that hour under our shortened sail to run down the wind to where that whale had last flirted his tail ere sounding.

But in my boyish enthusiasm, nothing of this deterred me. Hardly had I swayed inboard as I came streaking down that backstay to clear the bulwark and drop out of the rigging to the deck, than I was running forward to take my place alongside the bow boat, lest it get away without me.

"Good lad," grunted Red Jerry, giving me a pat on the back as I arrived. "Done like seaman."

I flushed with pride. So Red Jerry had noted my avoidance of the lubber's hole in the foretop going up; my avoidance of the ratlines coming down. Somehow I felt that pat on the back from him was my accolade, the recognition of my emergence as a sailor. But too breathless for any answer, I merely leaned against the bulwark beneath our boat swinging overhead from its cranes, ready at the word to leap overboard as it went down.

Slowly the minutes dragged away till that hour was nearly gone and we had covered some three miles of the space intervening to where my whale had sounded. Except for the groaning of the rigging and the slight splash of the waves rippling under our forefoot, a deep silence shrouded the *Beaver*. No man spoke. I believe even breathing was unconsciously restrained as all about, twenty-one pairs of eyes tensely scrutinized the sea ahead for the first sign of that rising fish.

Then simultaneously from Zenas Joy at the masthead and from every throat on deck rose the cry, "There she white-waters!"

A mile, perhaps, on our larboard bow came a boiling on the surface of the sea, then a mass of foam and spray falling away from a gleaming black hump, and immediately a fountain sprayed into the air, spread, dissipated like a vagrant mist. There was my whale, smooth and black as a shapeless mound of India rubber, swimming majestically to windward away from us, a solitary bull spouting regularly as he went, apparently at peace with all the world.

Instantly down went our helm to bring us as nearly as might be into his wake; and soon close hauled we followed seemingly at about his speed since, so far as I could judge, the *Beaver* neither closed nor opened on him. A moment thus, while awestruck and open-mouthed I gazed ahead at that vast bulk, and then at my elbow I caught a sharp intake of breath. There was Jared Macy, covetously eyeing that whale, muttering: "The biggest bull in creation! A hundred and fifty barrels of oil if he's a drop!"

JUST then, Captain Coffin, himself manning the wheel, luffed sharply to deaden the ship's headway and as we swung idly up into the wind and our topsails began to flap, with no hint of the Quaker in his voice, he bellowed: "Remember, lads! A dead whale or a stove boat! Lower away!"

Immediately all along the larboard

side, the boat falls started to run out. The bow boat dropped from the davit heads, came abreast the bulwarks. Over the rail into the falling boat in one mass shot the mate, Red Jerry, Obed Hussey and I, while at the davit cleats, Manuel, the Portuguese, and Peleg Coleman slacked sharply off. In another second, the boat hit the water, the falls slackened. Red Jerry at the bow and the mate in the stern cast loose, at which Peleg and Manuel came sliding pellmell down the side of the ship to join us. A sharp shove bow and stern and we were clear of the hull, towering now alongside us. Out went our sweeps, the mate shipped his long steering oar astern, gave us a sharp sheer out, cried: "Give way!"

Our five oars splashed into the water, and I lay back with all my weight on mine. Swinging under the *Beaver's* jibboom, scarce clear of the dolphin striker, we straightened away for the chase, the while astern of us I could see our other two boats still struggling on her weather side, to swing clear of our ship which was now falling off from the wind to fill sails again and stand on, tacking after us as best she might.

But even that vagrant glance of mine astern was too much for Jared Macy.

"Keep thine eyes on me, lad!" he ordered harshly. "Ye've work to do. Lay back, now!" The mate's body began to sway slightly back and forth in the rhythm of the stroke, speeding it up.

"Pull, all!" shouted Macy. "Heave an' break them oars! Lean into it, ye've hardly bent 'em yet! Pull an' shear the tholepins off! We'll never overhaul that fish this way! Lift her!"

I clenched my teeth, braced my bared heels against the bottom boards, tugged with all might. That fish was mine, I had first raised his spout, if human endurance could lay a whaleboat alongside him, then that boat should be the one I stroked. I was no weakling, even at sixteen; with my lanky body and long arms, I was fitted for an oarsman if ever anyone was. Back and forth I swung on the thwart, tugging with fierce determination on that ash oar, bending it per-

Men, here's one right across the plate:
Use Thin Gillettes—save dough—look great!
They whisk through beard in record time,
Yet four blades cost you just a dime!
Top quality at rock-bottom price
THIN Gillette BLADES
New Economy Pack 12 for 27c
4 for 10c
8 for 19c
The Thin Gillette Blade Is Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade

ceptibly each stroke in spite of what the mate said to the contrary.

Behind me, regardless of how good or poor I might myself be, I had four good oarsmen. The solid thump each stroke of oars against tholepins, muffled though they were in marline mats to deaden the sound, was proof of that, had not the way our whaleboat leaped ahead each lusty heave otherwise showed it. But best of all, there was evidence indisputable astern of us, for aft, unless I closed my eyes wholly, I could not avoid seeing that we were steadily drawing away from our other two boats, in spite of all the lurid profanity which drifted across the waves to me as in those boats, Owen Swain and Jedidah Mayhew urged their respective rowers on in our wake.

Endlessly we heaved. Just behind me, hampered somewhat by the line tub stowed at his feet, I could hear the labored breath of Obed Hussey stroking the larboard side, and even that of Peleg Coleman in the waist behind Obed, pulling the longest oar in the boat, a massive sixteen foot sweep. I gave fervent thanks that as stroke, the oar I had thrust out to starboard was but twelve feet in length, for even that, after some five minutes pulling on it, gave me the feeling that I had hold the butt of a young tree.

But however it felt, I could hardly give it my undivided attention. There in the sternsheets facing me was Jared Macy clinging to the steering oar, not for an instant pausing in his weird harangue. Bullying, pleading, cursing, aye, strangely enough even praying occasionally, he bent over us. Not if the fate of all humanity hung on the result, could he have been more wholeheartedly engrossed in making us pull harder.

"Break something, damn your eyes!" he cursed. "A hundred an' fifty barrels o' sperm ahead o' ye, and ye're letting it open on ye as if ye were backing water! Heave and break something! If ye can't break the oars, break the tholepins then, they're smaller! Only heave, my babies! Carry away something! An' if ye can't break anything else, heave an' break your worthless backs! What? Nothing broken yet? Afraid to hurt the boat? Pull, damn your lazy hides! Pull, an' tear out the gunwales; the owners won't mind! Oil's all they want, an' the devil take the boat an' all that's in her! Pull an' start her!"

WE PULLED with panting lungs and straining muscles, rowing our hearts out. It was not that what Jared Macy said made any difference; it was his manner of saying it. Hypnotically almost, he ruled us, with a maniacal gleam in his fiery eyes literally moulding us to his will.

How well we were making out as against our fish, there was, of course, no way of judging. Only the mate could see forward toward the whale, and from his ravings as we bucked into the head seas, I could only guess that we, the worst boat's crew he had ever seen in all his years of whaling, were steadily losing despite the aching muscles, panting lungs, and throbbing temples behind the oars. My heart grew leaden as my tired hands, my dreams of that golden guinea faded. For there was a catch to Hezekiah Coffin's offer. It was not enough that I had raised a blow; we had to land that whale "fin out" alongside the *Beaver,* ere I earned it. I clenched my teeth hopelessly. So this was whaling! Lavishing our very heart's blood toiling at those oars, only to be cursed by Jared Macy as futile idlers, unable to overhaul a leisurely swimming whale!

But soon by his increasing frenzy, I knew Jared Macy was deceiving us—we were gaining! And to make it certain, mingled with the muffled thumping of our oars I detected now a new sound—an odd puffing from ahead amazingly like a blacksmith's bellows suddenly sucking in and then slowly expelling vast gulps of air. We must be nearing the whale.

I had an irresistible impulse to turn my head for a glimpse, but some infinitesimal motion of my eyes must have betrayed my intention. Ere I had even begun to twist my neck, those eyes glittering fanatically above me in the sternsheets fastened on mine, and Jared Macy snarled: "Eyes offen that whale, or I'll lather thy head with the tiller! Lay back on that oar, damn ye!"

That the hysterical mate meant literally his threat and was prepared instantly to carry it out was perfectly obvious. Prudently I resisted my impulse to look and estimate for myself what danger we were driving ourselves into. Instead, with every remaining ounce of strength, I lay back to drive us speeding after the whale.

Jared Macy leaned against his steering oar, sheered us slightly out to starboard. Immediately I saw we must be close aboard our fish, for there a little to larboard of the wash left by our oars and whaleboat now was a separate wake in the waves. And once we were straightened away again parallel to it and a little clear, an abrupt termination came to the mate's loud exhortations.

"Silence, now!" he whispered, as if before we had been roaring out like demons possessed instead of him. "Not a word from any of ye, or ye'll gally that whale! Quiet, only pull now if ye love me!"

The incongruity of this after all which had gone before, at that moment escaped me, for just then out of the corner of my eye in the water to larboard I vaguely glimpsed some massive object slithering forward in a queer corkscrewing motion beneath the surface. Flukes! But obediently I heaved harder as if pleasing Jared Macy were my heart's desire.

"Stand up, Jerry!" hissed the mate. I heard a slight commotion in the bow, as Red Jerry shipped his oar, faced hurriedly about, seized his harpoon and braced his left leg against the forward thwart. Abaft him, facing Jared Macy's contorted visage, we four remaining oarsmen clenched our teeth and heaved on our oars, the while Red Jerry, black hair streaming now in the breeze, black eyes glittering as they lighted on that vast shining hump before him, balanced himself in the bow of the leaping whaleboat, both hands clutching the wood shaft of his harpoon poised high above his head.

Jared Macy jerked his steering oar sharply to starboard, sheered the boat suddenly in toward the whale, roared out, all caution gone: "Once again, lift her! Beach me on yon hump!"

With a last frenzied jerk, we at the oars lay back together. The boat leaped forward, struck something, lifted in the bow as if grounding on a rock.

"Give it to him, Jerry!" shrieked the mate.

Down came the Indian's harpoon. With a wild whoop that fairly split my ear drums, Red Jerry drove home the iron to the hitches, leaving only in view protruding from that black skin the violently quivering wood shaft. And as his hands let go, with one lightning motion he swept from the crotch beside him the second iron, without a pause swung it aloft and darted that also fiercely down into the gleaming back beneath him.

Everything after that happened simultaneously. Alongside us, the startled whale rolled violently sidewise, setting up a terrible wash; our boat heaved up and then slid dizzily away to starboard, almost pitching Red Jerry out; Jared Macy in the stern, raging like a madman, was shouting, "Stern all! Stern, for your lives!" and we four oarsmen on the thwarts in that crazily rocking boat were trying desperately to bury our blades in the foaming water that we might obey and get clear.

Hardly had I got a grip with my oar on something that felt enough like solid water to start to back, when so close beside the careening boat that I might have touched it, there reared suddenly up from the sea the vast tail of the harpooned monster, soaring full forty feet above the surface, flinging both the larboard oars up into the air like straws in the wind.

TOO terrified to move a muscle, I gazed upward at the mammoth body topped by those massive flukes waving awesomely against the sky above, expecting momentarily to see them come flailing down on our helpless boat to crush us into jelly. No use to row now. With no larboard oars, neither backing nor pulling ahead on the starboard side would do anything save pivot us about into even closer contact with that vast bulk beside us.

In that horrifying moment, only Red Jerry made any move. Reaching across the larboard gunwale as coolly as if that

rearing spermaceti were but an inanimate ebony pedestal, he planted his doubled up left leg solidly against the whale's exposed belly, burying it in the blubber, then straightened it suddenly out with a vicious kick that sent the whaleboat flying astern and clear enough so that the next instant when the whale sounded and those waving flukes shot downward past us we were hardly grazed and in nowise damaged.

Of that, however, I had little time just then to take notice. For now the harpoon line was running out over my oar as if secured to a thunderbolt, streaking by me from the tub behind my thwart to go aft to the loggerheard, and from that shooting forward down the middle of the whaleboat to the bow chock, the flying warp searing my left arm where it rubbed over it so that involuntarily I slid outboard as from contact with a branding iron.

As if this were not commotion enough in the boat for the moment, Jared Macy chose that time to exchange places with Red Jerry, so that to top off all, we on the thwarts had the mate leaping wildly over our oars going forward to starboard, the harpooner tumbling madly aft over the heads of the helpless rowers to larboard, and in between, that singing hempen line vibrating like a plucked harp string between loggerhead and bow chock on its way overboard into the depths.

That all this in that cockle shell tossing like a ship in the broken water left by the sounding whale, did not capsize us, was certainly due to no precaution taken by the mate to avoid it, and I can lay it only to the inbuilt seaworthiness of our whaleboat. At any rate, in another moment, still too dazed to comprehend fully what had happened, I came to, to find Red Jerry now manning the steering oar and in the bow, Jared Macy with a twelve foot lance in his hands, calmly sweeping in with it toward the side of the boat our two drifting larboard oars. Gingerly edging well to larboard to avoid entangling themselves in the flying warp, Obed and Manuel reached overboard to recover them, ship them beneath the harpon line, and once again we were ready for action.

The line was still going out, but not quite so fast now. Red Jerry, eyeing it, let go his steering oar an instant, dexterously caught up the line, flung a turn about the loggerhead, then another, so that he might if desired, put a strain on the line. But as quite evidently it was still running out too swiftly for that yet, he gripped his steering oar again, curtly bade Obed and me to boat our oars, and stand by either to seize the line and hold back on it or to heave in slack, whichever the further actions of the harpooned fish should indicate.

Still panting furiously from my previous exertions, I boated my oar thankfully enough, glad to relieve my aching palms and throbbing muscles of that burden, and swung about on my thwart, prepared to heave in should the occasion warrant, while Obed, on the forward side of the line tub, seized up a pair of quilted canvas cloths to protect his palms and prepared to hold back if ordered.

I glanced at the line tub. Even in those few hectic seconds it was over half empty. A hundred fathoms down at least, our whale had sounded already and still was plummeting into the depths. How much farther would he go? I looked apprehensively again at the fast emptying tub, with the hempen turns, layer after layer, darting upward like a continuous stream of uncoiling cobras striking at their prey. Yes, there unsecured to anything and hanging free and clear over the edge of the tub was the eye splice in the bitter end of the warp. At least, should the sounding whale take out our full two hundred fathoms of line, he could not drag us under the surface with him.

AND now, save for the singing of the surging warp, all was quiet again in our boat. Forward in the bow, lance poised, stood Jared Macy, hatless, shirt torn off now and bared to the waist, his legs braced wide apart, eyes glued to the sea beneath the stem where, centered vertically in a little whirlpool, our harpoon line was vanishing. Just abaft him, forehead swathed in a gaudily colored kerchief, sat swarthy Manuel at his recovered oar, silently regarding the

waves alongside. On the midship thwart, fingering the only oar now out to starboard was Peleg, just as fully occupied in peering down his side into the depths. Then, facing each other across the line tub, came Obed and I, our gaze riveted on the vibrating hempen line, ready at the word to seize it. And finally in the sternsheets stood Red Jerry, boatsteerer now, gripping his long steering oar awaiting the orders of the mate.

Red Jerry's task as harpooner was over; he had beyond all doubt firmly enough driven his two harpoons through the blubber into the flesh below to fasten us to that whale. Now it was the mate's business with that slender lance of his to probe through oily blubber and tough flesh far into the vitals of the whale where pulsed his huge heart and set him to spouting blood instead of vapor till at last he rolled "fin out." And all we in the boat had now to do was, when that maddened bull bent probably on our destruction rose, to keep the boat in close enough contact with him so that Jared Macy leaning over the bow, might at his convenience proceed with the probing.

Ordinarily a stricken whale, unacquainted with man and his weapons, sounds to full depth to rid himself of the strange enemy piercing his back and stays there till the need for air forces him to rise, then furiously swims off on the surface, striving only to tear away the lines and free himself, during the which effort he usually falls a relatively easy prey to the keen lance wielded alongside him as the boat is hauled up. But occasionally a fish which has managed to escape one or two such encounters learns better tactics, and such a "fighting whale" we had now to deal with I gathered immediately from Red Jerry's first remark.

"Be wary this fish, mister mate!" sang out the Indian, once he was firmly planted in the sternsheets. "Him fighting whale or me squaw! Two twisted irons already in his back when I strike him. That bull meet whalers before!"

"Aye, aye! Leave him to me!" replied the mate curtly. "I've a long enough lance!" Abruptly the discussion ended.

That brief interchange did nothing to restore in me any of the confidence already blasted from my mind by the close view of the whale I had raised. A fighting whale? His vast bulk was terrifying enough to me already had he been the most unsophisticated whale afloat.

But I was given no time for cogitation over that. Our running line, now three-quarters gone, commenced perceptibly to slow up, then stopped going out altogether.

"Hold it!" ordered Macy.

Immediately Obed gripped the line with both his canvas lined palms, braced himself to hold back on the turns about the loggerhead. There was no need. The mate, tentatively pressing his leg against the line to test its strain, found it altogether slack.

"Heave in lively!" he shouted.

With both fists, hand over hand as fast as I could heave it, I started to haul in on the line. Red Jerry tossed off the two turns he had taken round the loggerhead, and Obed immediately began to coil the slack down in loose loops in the sternsheets. No time now to try restowing the line in the nearly emptied tub—it was coming in too fast for that. Frantically I heaved in wet hemp dripping with water, soaking myself and everything about me with spray flying from the line. Except for the weight of the soaked warp, there was no strain at all on it as I yanked in and Obed strove to keep abreast of me in coiling down. Our whale was evidently rising fast; much faster indeed than I could heave in slack. Where, I wondered, would he breach? And could we hold him back enough as he strove to rush off with us so that our other two boats, lying on their oars now a short distance astern of us, might pull up close enough also to get fast to him?

In the bow in front of me as I furiously hauled in slack stood the mate, roving eyes searching the surface all about us for the first spout from the rising whale, his lance poised lightly across his bared chest, ready instantly for a dart should the fish break surface anywhere within reach. Between me and the mate, still peering into the water as they rested on their oars, were Manuel and Peleg, while in a close knot in the sternsheets were Obed at my side, coiling line, and Red

Jerry clutching the steering oar, impassive now, awaiting the next move.

As unexpectedly as a bolt of lightning from the placid sky above us, and as suddenly, it came. Jared Macy stiffened against the forward thwart, half-turned aft, shrieked: "Stern all! Ster—"

I caught a metallic gleam shimmering as it rose beneath the boat. Before the words were fully out of Jared Macy's mouth, a long tapered jaw lined both sides with monstrous ivory teeth shot from the water fifteen feet above our starboard bow and almost simultaneously to larboard of us the mountainous black mass of a sperm whale's blunt snout followed it, gripping the bow of our boat between! Our whaleboat reared suddenly up, I shot as suddenly downward into the stern. Those vast jaws above closed slightly, though in no wise slackening in their rise, and the whole bow of our boat crumpled up, broke from the stern, vanished inside that erupting maw.

STILL rising, the body of the whale shot up before me from the depths, blotting out sea and sky and all else as I looked upward through the void, framed in splintered planking, where had an instant before been the bow of our whaleboat and my shipmates. Nothing was there now save the black flank of the whale, rising with incredible velocity vertically from the water, while the broken ends of the cedar planking in what was left of the after half of the boat, thumped irregularly against that dripping hide to bite into it and be carried upward with it.

Tossed on my back into the sternsheets, sprawled helplessly out in the mass of wet line coiled down there, I found myself, whether I would or no, staring vertically up at a sight which froze my blood. There in the jaws of the whale, slowly closing now as its vast form began to describe an arc in air, was Jared Macy! Full half his body from his waist out protruded grotesquely from the whale's mouth, his long arms waving futilely in air above the useless lance which had dropped from his hands, his face turned downward toward us who were sprawled out in the remnants of his boat.

Majestically the whale rose to breach completely clear of the sea—its tremendous head, sleek body, and gigantic flukes all at once exposed above the waves, a sight to be seen on but few occasions in a lifetime of whaling. But I had then no eyes for that, nor any thought even of my own danger. Horror-stricken, I followed only the path of that monstrous head as it curved in space above me, my gaze riveted only on Jared Macy.

There he lay, sprawled half in, half out across the lower jaw of that widespread coral-colored cavern, staring down at us, at first a look of blank amazement on his face. But that passed swiftly, succeeded by a convulsive gleam of fear, as realizing his desperate predicament, he strove to roll himself free. But apparently his legs, entangled inside that mouth in the wreckage of the boat invisible to us, held him firmly as the jaws began to close.

To my dying day I shall never forget his face, and many a night since in my dreams have I lived again that scene.

With face contorted, neck muscles standing strongly out and arms flailing wildly, the mate twisted his bared torso sharply about, grasped with both hands the huge tooth alongside him, strove to writhe free of his entanglement, only to end as he began, an impotent fragment amongst the ferocious teeth of that lower jaw, save that in his twistings, his eyes had caught a glimpse of the ponderous jaw above him starting to descend.

That ended his struggle. The straining muscles in his chest relaxed, he ceased twisting and hung again head down, his countenance a ghastly white, his eyes staring from far above upon us as if mutely imploring help, for his lips were tightly closed and never moved. In another instant the closing jaws came together about his naked waist. Over Jared Macy's face shot a spasm of frightful agony, his eyes bulged suddenly, and the whale, curving down again toward the water, plunged with a thundering crash back into the sea with his victim, trailing behind his vanishing flukes in a lofty arc across the sky our

harpoon line, streaming from the irons planted in his back.

So numbed was I with horror that not till I found myself awash to my neck, sitting in the waterlogged remnants of the stern of the whaleboat, did I consciously do anything for myself. But then as I saw the slack turns of the hempen warp floating idly on the surface, begin suddenly to disappear after the whale, I realized that as I sat there alongside Obed Hussey where we two had been tumbled into the maze of harpoon line, with snarled coils looped about our arms and legs and even our necks, we were any instant like to be dragged down into the ocean depths after that sounding whale to be strangled by the coils about our throats if we did not drown first.

Frenziedly I strove to clear myself, but not Laocoön himself and both his sons were more entangled in clinging coils than we, and I doubt not that we should surely have gone to join Jared Macy in the deep had not Red Jerry, floundering in the waves alongside where he had been tossed clear of the upended boat, looking across the awash gunwale, seen us struggling with those deadly coils.

Instantly he flung his body through the water toward a loose turn still floating on the surface where once had been the bow of the boat, and savagely dug his teeth into the hemp. Twisting on his back, he clung thus to the line the while he fumbled with one hand beneath the surface for his sheath knife, found it, drew it forth. Then grasping the line with his left hand, he jerked it taut against his teeth, swung up over his face the gleaming blade in his right fist and with one vicious slash across the stout hemp, severed it. And none too soon, for in another second, that end of the line disappeared suddenly after the whale, leaving us three clinging to the shattered stern of our boat with only our heads above water, a few bits of wreckage about, and our emptied line tub dancing lightly off atop the waves, where perhaps ten seconds before had been been the bow boat, the mate and all his crew, awaiting some sign of a rising whale.

OWEN SWAIN'S boat picked us up, Red Jerry, Obed and me, and promptly headed back for the *Beaver* with us, leaving Jedidah Mayhew, third mate, and his boat to search amongst the wreckage strewing the roiled surface of the sea for Manuel and Peleg.

But never a sign of either did they see, unless an ominous red tinge in the waves thereabouts be taken as such. What happened to them we never knew. Whether maimed and crushed by that savage uprush which had torn their half of the boat away, they had sunk unnoticed into the sea, or whether, unlike Jared, they had been completely engulfed with the wreckage of the bow in the mouth of that colossal whale, we could not tell. They were simply and completely gone, and after satisfying himself of it, the third mate hastily abandoned that perilous spot lest the whale repeat its tactics, and rowed hurriedly back to the *Beaver*, lying to now not a quarter of a mile off.

Unencumbered by any passengers, Jedidah Mayhew, who had delayed not overlong in his search, soon overhauled the second mate's boat, so that practically together we came alongside the hove to *Beaver*. Immediately both boats hooked on their dangling falls, preparatory to sending their crews on deck to hoist away, but ere that could be done, Hezekiah Coffin, pausing only long enough to turn the wheel over to the cook, came rushing to the side, roaring: "Belay hoisting! Stay in the boats!"

Taken full aback by that, both mates looked quizzically up the gunwale, the while their crews, already on their feet ready to scramble up the sides, sank heavily back on the thwarts.

"And why, Cap'n?" asked Swain, speaking first in his new dignity as the mate, now that Jared Macy was dead.

"Why, thou blockhead? Thou askest me why?" Captain Coffin stared down at him in amazed indignation. "To take yon whale, of course, when again he blows! Why else?"

Dripping wet, I sat shivering, though not from cold, on the after thwart beside the stroke oarsman, looking up the towering wood side at our captain. There

was no question but that he was dumbfounded at the mate's query, yet he was not half so dumbfounded as I next was at Owen Swain's immediate reply.

"Not I, Cap'n," said Swain solemnly. "Yon sperm can blow and breach alongside as he pleases, and I'll not lower again for him. I whale it not for glory, and I believe not in fighting whales that too cunningly fight me. Saw ye not with what devilish craft that fiend slew Macy? And where be now his two men and his stout boat? I have a wife and a suckling babe in Nantucket whom I desire again to see. Three good men and a stove boat already that demon hath cost the *Beaver*. 'Tis enough!"

"And to that, I say 'Amen,' Cap'n," added Jedidah Mayhew swiftly from the stern of the other boat. "Belay further pursuit, lest worse occur! Yon old bull is Satan incarnate!"

Startled though I was that both remaining mates should dare so flatly to disobey the captain's orders, yet could I see that both were acting simply the part of prudent men whose aim was to garner oil, not glory. So I looked for the captain, in the face of their well-founded opposition, to give way and allow the boats to be hoisted in, but I learned that I had misjudged what iron lay in the Quaker soul of Hezekiah Coffin.

"Thou'rt wary to match thy brains then, if indeed thou hast any, 'gainst yon dumb tun of oil?" Contemptuously the captain looked down on his mates. "Nantucket had remained but a barren sand heap nurturing a few grazing sheep had it been for such sons as thou. A hundred and fifty barrels of good sperm close by and ye shrink from it? On deck, then, Owen Swain, and let me take thy place in the boat behind the lance. I'll save thee for that suckling babe thou'rt so thoughtful of, the while I slay myself that whale! On deck with thee, I say!"

With alacrity, the mate hastened to obey *that* order, but he was not alone. Up with him as one man scrambled his whole boat's crew, harpooner, oarsmen, all, apparently in no wise desirous again of coming to close grips with those wicked jaws they had last seen closing on Jared Macy. Only we three castaways from his ill-fated craft remained, wet and dripping, in the boat.

THAT imitation of the mate the captain had not counted on, but in vain he ordered the crew back. They were all of one mind with their mate, stolidly behind him in his refusal. The captain raged and stormed at them, there in the rolling *Beaver's* waist, but to no purpose. Not a man of those who close by had witnessed the ferocious ingenuity with which the whale had risen to destroy our boat and half its crew, could be either persuaded or bullied into approaching him again.

The skipper gave up. Leaving the recalcitrant group on deck clustered behind Owen Swain, he once again approached the bulwark, leaned over, looked down into the rocking boat where still I sat.

"Thou, Red Jerry, hast once struck that whale and know he is but a fish. Durst thou dart another harpoon an' I lay thee on him?"

A grim smile played about Red Jerry's lips; a fierce gleam lighted up his savage eyes.

"Aye, Cap'n," replied the Indian. "Maybe one, maybe dozen, till fish roll fin out!"

"Aye, Jerry!" cried Hezekiah. "E'en though thou be a Gay Header and off island, Nantucket can be proud of thee! And thou, Tom Folger, and thou, Obed, wilt pull for me an oar again behind Red Jerry while he strikes that whale?"

I looked dubiously at Obed, pale, wet, and unnerved as he had been dragged from the sea. Would he do it? Just as dubiously Obed looked at me, shivering yet in my bedraggled shirt and clinging canvas trousers. Then I glimpsed Red Jerry impassively eyeing me as if weighing of what mettle I might be, and there flashed across me the thought that had that savage, himself well clear of all danger, been less venturesome and swift with teeth and knife in cutting the harpoon line, neither I nor Obed had been in that boat now with him.

"Aye, aye, Cap'n!" I answered soberly, and Obed, his mind resolved by my decision (and perhaps even for the same

reason) nodded also grave acquiescence.

"Good!" exclaimed the captain. "Give me always a Folger and a Hussey for a greasy voyage! And now between thee both and the cooper and the cook, I have my crew." He raised his eyes to the masthead where swayed the cooper on the crosstrees. "Zenas, lay thee down from aloft!" he shouted, and then turning to the mate nearby, ordered bruskly, "Detail one of thy men at the wheel, that the cook may go with me."

Immediately the cook arrived from the wheel and the cooper soon after from the masthead, the captain hustled them overboard into the boat alongside, giving neither of them any opportunity to discuss the situation with the mate or any of his boat's crew, even had they been so minded, and in another moment came sliding himself down the after fall to seize the steering oar. Hastily, lest even yet he lose someone of his crew, he pushed the boat away from the side and detailed us at the oars, regardless of how before we had rowed, so that now I found myself pulling second bow just abaft Red Jerry, with Zenas Joy before me. Obed once again at the tub oar, and the cook stroking.

A few strokes carried us well clear, when the captain, bidding us lay on our oars, turned to look back at the *Beaver.* Under her larboard quarter, hooked to the falls, still lay Jedidah Mayhew's boat and all her crew.

"Cast off and follow," ordered the captain. "Thou may'st for thy fears play loose boat today, Jedidah, and while we fasten to the whale, perchance thereby be of some use to us in diverting his attention." He turned about again, sang out to us, "Give way!" We leaned forward, laid back together. But I could see from our first stroke that we had neither the power now nor the skill with which in Jared Macy's boat the oars had been plied, and I doubted, should we again have a stern chase after the whale, that we should ever get close enough for Red Jerry to dart a harpoon.

A MODERATE pull to windward brought us to the reddened water where the whale had breached and then sounded. A few drifting oars, some splintered planking, and the awash stern of our shattered boat marked it sharply enough even had that sickening reddish hue been absent. Just short of that spot, once again we rested on our oars and waited.

With what trepidation I peered over the side into the water during that wait I need scarce mention. I sat now on the thwart next the bow where Manuel in all the brave gaiety of flaming kerchief and crimson shirt had sat when before the whale had risen, and where now was Manuel? I shrank from pondering the only two alternatives.

Between attempts to pierce the depths for some indication of the vanished fish, my fleeting glimpses round about the heaving surface showed me Jedidah Mayhew's boat resting prudently on oars some dozen lengths to leeward of us, and the *Beaver,* still hove to on the larboard tack, rolling gently amongst the waves several cables off with apparently all those on board save the new lookout and helmsman, anxiously lining the weather rail to watch.

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How long since the whale had sounded with Jared Macy dangling from his jaws? Certainly far less than the hour his reserve of aerated blood allowed him, but whether it had been ten minutes or thirty, I had but a vague idea and consequently little notion of how long a wait was yet before us. But Captain Coffin, as if sure of but a few seconds, with surprising agility for all his years tore off his coat, rolled up his shirtsleeves, and again grasped the steering oar to confront us in his drab waistcoat, a stout figure beneath his broad-brimmed hat that was the very antithesis of Jared Macy's lithe leanness.

"There she blows!" breathed Red Jerry softly. Sure enough, a hundred fathoms away, broad off our larboard beam, rose a majestic spout. And immediately following it there also rose vertically from the sea the whole head of our whale, to stand some thirty feet above the surface the while he slowly revolved, scanning the horizon for his late enemies.

Immediately he sighted us, he sank back horizontally, then with a flirt of his tail which sent up a heavy cloud of spray, swung about, and head out, exposing the full blunt cliff that made up his massive snout, started dead for us!

"Give way!" shouted the skipper. Obediently I bent to my oar, my eyes nevertheless fixed sidewise on that terrifying vision to larboard bearing down on us, wondering only in what direction we should flee for safety. To my overwhelming amazement and infinite dismay, instead of fleeing in any direction, Hezekiah Coffin bore sharply down to starboard on his long, steering oar, swung the boat about heading us directly for the on-coming spermaceti, and then to top off all, roared out: "Heave now, my lads! Spring and start her!"

What madness had seized our captain to drive us headlong into the oncoming jaws of death I could not fathom, but I could do nothing save comply and in a moment we five at the oars were tugging mightily, fairly lifting the boat along through the water.

"Stand up, Jerry!" ordered the captain.

Just behind me, once again as I labored I heard Red Jerry boat his oar, swing about, grab up a harpoon. But all I saw, looking down the whaleboat over the three oarsmen astern of me, was Hezekiah Coffin, his graying locks flying in the breeze, his thick lips tightly compressed, clinging grimly to the handle of his steering oar, holding us head on for the charging whale!

Suddenly the skipper flung the full weight of his thick body against the steering oar, jamming it hard down to larboard. Instantly the speeding whaleboat shot over to starboard and in that same instant as we swung off diagonally athwart our previous course, there loomed up rushing by to larboard close aboard us the head of the whale, towering high above the boat, mouth open, with livid throat and massive teeth in that tremendous lower jaw eager to seize upon us.

Hardly had I glimpsed the blunt snout and that terrifying opened mouth beside me than the captain jerked his steering oar hard to starboard, swung the boat over to straighten it up parallel to the monster once again and only a few feet away, though of course, headed opposite, and suddenly roared out: "Give it to him, Jerry!"

I heard the whir of the line as the harpoon shot sideways by my head through the air and the solid thump with which it landed in the soft blubber. The whale gave a hoarse bellow as if in pain, writhed sidewise, raised his mighty flukes in fury. Red Jerry grabbed up his second iron, hurriedly flung it, but such was the turmoil there of careening boat and infuriated whale speeding past each other, that it missed, going overboard only to dangle on the harpoon line. Another second and we were clear of the whale, fast to him with one iron, as those lifted flukes came down on the water astern of us with a thundering splash.

"Way enough!" shouted the captain, and immediately let go the steering oar to spring forward over the thwarts and man the lance, while Red Jerry leaped aft to take up the steering. Meanwhile I shrank instinctively outboard against the gunwale to get clear of the surging harpoon line, but there was no need. The line was hardly moving out at all.

Brandishing his lance in the bow and bellowing across the water at that maddened whale stood Hezekiah Coffin, no sign of any Quaker in his embattled figure now.

THIS time, instead of sounding as before or rushing off on the surface into the wind towing us behind, either of which maneuver would have taken our line out with lightning rapidity, the harpooned bull, baffled in his first charge and roaring from that spiracle of his in rage and pain, was lying astern of us in the water, his powerful tail raised a little clear of the surface with wide spread flukes slowly swinging horizontally to and fro over the waves, delicately feeling over them for any contact with our boat.

A little clear of that astounding tail spread full fifteen feet from tip to tip over the water, I had in the brief interval while I rested on my sweep ere Red Jerry reached the steering oar, my best opportunity to view close aboard the whale I had raised. Easily over three boat lengths from snout to flukes, he must have been nearly as long as the *Beaver,* certainly well over eighty feet, with a breadth across his body perhaps of two fathoms. That we might in our try-pots boil a hundred and fifty barrels of good sperm oil from his blubber, was easily believable.

Further than that in my estimate I hardly got when we were in action again. Feeling nothing at all with the tips of those sensitive flukes so daintily feathered over the surface searching for us, the bull dropped his tail into the sea, and started to come about toward us.

As he swung broadside, and for the first time, just above the point of his jaw some twenty feet from his snout I saw his eye, (a tiny glistening ball hardly larger than that of a calf and seemingly quite insignificant for so vast a creature)

he paused a moment in his turning in indecision.

For now while he could see us well enough with that little left eye glaring wickedly at me from the high blank cliff of black skin on that side, he must at the same instant with his right eye on the other side of that soaring mountain which formed his head, have glimpsed Jedidah Mayhew playing loose boat, and thereby had presented simultaneously to his brain two entirely separate pictures for his consideration.

In that moment of his hesitation, Red Jerry dexterously threw two turns of our slack line about the loggerhead, and bade Obed stand by to boat his oar and hold back on the line, while Captain Coffin, bracing himself in the bow with the lance, made ready for battle.

What queer quirk in the two differing images before his mind prompted that bull's decision was, of course, beyond me, but what he did was totally unexpected. Wholly disregarding us, he rushed off toward the boat on his right side, starting the line out suddenly from the tub, while Red Jerry yelled, "Hold it! Hold it!" meanwhile swinging hard over on his steering oar to turn the boat about into his wake.

Obed flung his oar inboard, grabbed his canvas pads, gripped the flying line, heaved back against the turns around the loggerhead. For an instant the tightening hempen turns in a wreath of blue smoke surged round the wooden post, then suddenly seized hard about it, stopping the line, but at the same time giving our stem such a jerk, as the suddenly taut line to the whale brought up sidewise against the bow chock, as nearly to capsize our boat which still lay broadside to the direction of the line.

The next moment our whaleboat, yanked bodily around by the harpoon line, was flying over the waves in the wake of the whale, bounding with sickening concussions of its thin cedar bottom from crest to crest while the spray going by both bows in two wide sheets fairly drenched us all clinging desperately to our thwarts to avoid being tossed out.

But precarious as our situation may have seemed to me, it was safety itself compared to what immediately I saw the third mate faced. For Jedidah Mayhew, never expecting a rush from the whale once we had successfully made fast, lay motionless hardly a dozen boat lengths off from the leviathan now furiously charging him. And ere he could get way enough on his boat to maneuver in avoidance, the whale, head lifted high and mouth wide open, was practically upon his boat.

I had a fleeting vision of harpooner and bow oarman leaping from their thwarts to spring wildly overboard and the next instant the whale had the bow of that boat in his jaws, lifting it high up to spill Mayhew and his remaining men incontinently into the sea. The whale stopped then in his charge, dropped the remnants of the crushed boat, once more closed his maw on the stern to make basket work of that, and then started swinging about, flailing the sea with mighty strokes of his flukes to finish the havoc he had wrought.

"Haul up! Haul up!" shrieked Hezekiah, seeing the ocean before him lashed into swirling foam amidst which bobbed the heads of six men frenziedly striving to swim clear of snapping jaws and pounding flukes while all about them floated smashed planks, broken oars, lance poles, and the tangled coils of their harpoon line.

DESPERATELY Zenas and I, facing forward, heaved in on our line to drag us close aboard, that we might attract the whale's attention and give our unfortunate shipmates a chance to get beyond his reach ere it was too late. And while with set teeth, blanched faces, and straining arms we hauled in the wet hemp, behind us Obed, the cook, and Red Jerry tensely grasped their oars to maneuver the boat should the whale charge us. And just forward of me in the very bow, brandishing his lance and bellowing across the water at the top of his lungs to attract the attention of that maddened whale, stood Hezekiah Coffin, no sign of any Quaker in his embattled figure now.

The whale paid no attention to us. There were too many floating objects

close aboard of greater interest to occupy him fully. Immediately his tail, feathering lightly again over the sea, touched anything, down it came on the water with the thunder of a thousand drums, to demolish whatever was beneath. That he should be so enraged was reasonable enough, seeing that his sleek black back somewhat resembled a huge pin cushion, there being atop it and a little to the right of his hump the two harpoons which Red Jerry had first planted as well as the broken shafts of two badly twisted irons left there in some previous encounters with whalers, and in addition now the harpoon in his left side to which our line was attached.

As a consequence of his concentration, we were enabled to haul ourselves close in on the whale's left flank, coming diagonally from astern him just clear of his thrashing flukes almost to bring our bow up to where the harpoon was darted into his side right abaft his fin.

At that point, Captain Coffin waited no longer. Lifting high his poised lance, he lunged fiercely forward, drove its slender iron shaft full six feet into the body of the whale, started furiously to churn its oval point about inside. The affect on the whale was instantaneous. He rolled suddenly away from us, leaving the lance which the skipper still held firmly clutched, to draw free of his body, followed by a gush of thick blood. And ere, as I sat on the fore thwart I could lean back to haul in line again so that the captain might get in a second thrust, or he could order Red Jerry to back water and lie clear a moment should that be what he desired, the ponderous flukes of that writhing whale lifted from the sea, came soaring with incredible speed across the water toward me over the gunwale of the boat to sweep in a gale of wind like a vast black canopy right over my head, blotting the sky from sight.

With a sickening crunch, those flukes caught Hezekiah Coffin, as he stood poising himself for another thrust, squarely across his waistcoat, whisking him before my terrified eyes clean out of the boat!

Too stunned for conscious action, I fell back on my thwart, only to hear Red Jerry shouting, "Stern all! Stern!"

Automatically I fumbled for my oar, but before my clawing fingers found it, I felt the rushing harpoon line searing my chest. I shrank away instinctively to starboard, lest I be tangled in it. And there against the gunwale, as I came erect, wildly looking about to orient myself, I heard Red Jerry shrieking, "Cut line! Cut line!"

The whale was gone, sounded evidently, leaving the surface of the sea an eddying mass of red foam littered with the smashed debris of the other boat, both men and lumber. But we were still fast to him, for there, smoking out through the bow chock was the singing harpoon line. I reached forward into the empty bow where the captain had been standing, caught up a hatchet from the floorboards, brought it viciously down on the bow chock across the flying hemp, parted the line.

Sick at heart, once we were free of the whale we looked about in the swirling froth amidst the wreckage for survivors. Red Jerry caught sight of some hair undulating on the water nearby, reached over the gunwale, dug his fingers into it to drag up, half drowned and wholly unconscious, the third mate, Jedidah Mayhew. In addition, nearby we picked up, still swimming frantically away, two terrified seamen who had managed to get clear to leeward.

But that was all. Of the rest of that boat's crew of six, or of Hezekiah Coffin, we found no trace. Crushed, undoubtedly, by those death-dealing flukes which in the twinkling of an eye had reduced them to bloody heaps of lifeless pulp, they had sunk soundlessly to unmarked graves at the bottom of the sea.

Stoically Red Jerry, now in command, surveyed a moment the scene of battle, a turbulent blotch of crimson froth and scattered splinters on the heaving sea, then ordered gutturally: "Give way all! We go back to ship!"

IT WAS a sad remnant of the *Beaver's* company that lay back on the falls to hoist in on the quarter the solitary remaining larboard boat. On the bow and in the waist, the cranes there, standing gaunt against the bulwarks empty of the

boats that a few hours before had swung from those davit heads, were mute reminders for the rest of our voyage of the disaster the ferocious whale I had raised had caused us.

Captain, mate, five of our shipmates from the forecastle, and two stove boats —that was the toll of our encounter. One third of our entire crew, including two officers, killed in that one battle—a slaughter to make many a bloody naval action seem tame indeed by comparison.

Hardly had we hoisted our lone remaining boat to the davit heads when the whale rose again to commence spouting off our larboard beam the while he savagely disported himself with his flukes, reducing to still smaller kindling the wreckage of our two boats floating thereabouts. But while he spouted and thrashed about in full view of all on deck, and with such thunderous flailings beat the sea with his flukes that had we all been blind, our ears alone could not have left us ignorant of his presence, yet no man raised again the cry, "There she blows!"

Instead with only imprecations on that fighting whale for the shipmates he had so horribly reft us of, we prudently left him to his own devices.

Under Owen Swain's orders, captain now, we hastened to make all sail before the wind and get away from there before it should enter the furious monster's mind perhaps to connect the *Beaver* with the boats he was demolishing and the injuries he had sustained, and as a consequence come churning through the waves to ram us with that vast snout of his, stave in our side, and send the hulk of the *Beaver* to join the body of her captain in the ooze of the ocean floor.

Our whaling cruise was over. With the responsibility for the ship so unexpectedly thrown upon his shoulders, it was obvious from his every gesture that there was but one idea now in Owen Swain's mind—to get the *Beaver* back (if he could) to Nantucket, and that as quickly as might be. For aside from the loss of Hezekiah Coffin and Jared Macy, which left us without an officer aboard competent to navigate the ship, it was found when finally we resuscitated the third mate and he strove to rise, that he had both legs broken between knee and thigh.

How that had happened and at what moment, Jedidah Mayhew could not tell, and it made little difference. But stretched out now in his berth below, his broken legs rudely splinted, he was of no further use to us as an officer.

With but thirteen men all told left on their feet, the *Beaver* could no longer man even two boats; with our demoralized crew and without a navigator left aboard, it was madness to continue the cruise even had we been able. So with a "clean" ship, the *Beaver,* but three weeks out of port and without a barrel of oil in her hold, was prudently headed back for home.

Editor's Note: It is on the long voyage home that Tom Folger and the remnants of the *Beaver's* crew encounter John Paul Jones in the harbor of Tobago. "Captain Paul" is the main character in Commander Ellsberg's novel from that point on.

DESTROYER for ENGLAND

By DURAND KIEFER

The plane swerved, banked, and crashed into the sea.

IF YOU arsk me," said the little cockney steward, "hit's a ruddy fat job of 'igh explosive 'aulin'. I 'ears as 'ow there's ten thousand ton of cordite from the Stites in this 'ere bloomin' convoy we'll be nursin'. A bloody sartin massacree if any of them tubs gets 'it."

The steward didn't know, of course,

any more than the rest of us, but his guess was as good as any. Ever since I'd rejoined the destroyer in Halifax we'd been trying to figure out what our first job would be, but the officers weren't talking, so all the crew got was just scuttle-butt. That's Navy for back-fence gossip.

I didn't care a lot what job they handed old *Winnie*. In a war like this a sailor can't be choosey, and besides, I asked for it. I knew *Winnie* was one old tin-can that could handle anything the Limeys could cook up for her. You see, I'd served twelve years on her—all my time in the U. S. Navy. So naturally when they swapped her off to the British just about the time my third enlistment expired, I just took my discharge and went up to Canada to go with her. I didn't have any trouble getting in the Royal Navy with my experience and they were glad to send me back aboard my old ship.

Without any family connections any more, old *Winnie* was the only home I had and I wasn't going to see her sent through hell without standing by her. Of course *Winnie* wasn't her name. She was the U.S.S. *Wingate* during all the years I put in on her, but we always called her *Winnie* for short. I never thought of her by any other name—especially the fancy handle the British tied on her. It was *Huntington,* or something, but it doesn't matter. She was just *Winnie* to me, an old pig-iron flush-decked flighty wench of doubtful antecedents and a lurid past, but the only true love I ever had.

AFTER a couple of weeks of general quarters and regular gun drills every day, the new crew was shaping up fine. I was surprised at how quick these Limeys caught on. They were just naturally sailors, I guess. They were glad to have me show them short-cuts I'd learned for speeding up the loading. After all, I'd made first-class gunner's mate on *Winnie* three years ago and held that rate ever since.

There was the same old loading-machine up on the galley deck-house amidships, between No. 2 and 3 guns, and after I'd checked over the main battery from stem to stern to see that all four of the 4-inch guns were still in the good shape I'd left them in, I spent a lot of time up on the machine watching the loading crews slam the dummy drill shells through it. They worked down to ten rounds a minute, which is still pretty slow, but I figured it would do.

I was second senior of the rated gunnery men. There were a couple of ratings under me that I got along fine with, but the chief gunner's mate—they called him "the gunner"—was hard to work for. In the first place, he was a Yorkshireman and didn't speak English so you could recognize it, and in the second place, he had an idea that he knew more about my guns that I did. I tried to show him a couple of things about them but he just acted like I was the man from Mars, or something, so I gave up trying to tell him anything. I'd expected to have the care of the whole battery like before because of my rate and experience with it, but this Gunner Snead stuck me back on No. 4, on top of the after deck-house, just like I was a third-class, or something.

The anti-aircraft gun was down on the fantail just aft of this deck-house. *Winnie* only had one; a little 3-incher right between the depth-charge racks. It made a whale of a lot of noise, but that's about all. On top of that, the sliding breech-plug had a habit of jamming on unburned powder grains from the old ammunition it used. Considering the air force *Winnie* was up against now, it was darned little protection. I tried to show Gunner Snead how to rig up an air hose from a torpedo flask to keep the breech clear but he wouldn't listen to me, as usual.

Just two weeks after I joined her, Winnie backed out of her berth with three of her sisters that had been turned over with her and we all steamed out of the roads in column, heading north and east for Cape Race, Newfoundland, under sealed orders. I couldn't see any difference in the way the Limey skippers handled our destroyers, keeping them closed up to 200 yards, stern to stem, as well as our own officers did. There was a lot of maneuvering of the

ships in formation, like close-order marching drill, as the weather was reasonably clear and the skipper in command of the force was probably anxious to smooth up his communications and ship-handling. We made a few dummy depth-charge runs that went off pretty smooth, and held more gunnery drills and one firing practice that was ragged but not as much as I expected. These Lime-juicers were good seamen all right, and pretty fair gunners, considering. I got the feeling those first few days at sea that *Winnie* was in good hands. All except for that bull-headed Yorkshireman, Snead.

HE HAD a lot of queer and sometimes downright dangerous notions that worried me considerable. Like pulling the safety-forks from the depth-charges and leaving them off. These safety-forks slipped into a groove in the end of the firing pin on the depth-charge pistols and kept the big TNT charges harmless until they were dumped. Then, as they went over, the forks were yanked out by wires fastened to the racks and the pistols were then armed and ready to be fired by the hydrostatic pressure at the desired depth. Snead said it was a haywire arrangement and ordered the safety-forks removed so there wouldn't be any chance of a wire breaking and leaving a safety-fork on when a charge was dumped. I stalled as long as I could about taking them off, figuring he might forget about it, but he didn't. He just got sore and threatened to report me for disobeying orders. So I pulled the safety-forks and left over a dozen armed ash-cans in the racks. A couple of tons of TNT rattling around back there on the fantail right over the ship's screws. Sure destruction for the whole ship if we were hit anywhere near them, but what could I do? Orders is orders, and you don't go around complaining about them over a senior's head in any man's navy. But just like I figured, Mr. Snead just about blew us all to hell with his obstinacy before we got through.

Toward the end of the second day out of Halifax, about twenty miles off Cape Race, we sighted a crazy jig-saw puzzle of black and white blocks all jumbled together and steaming along a couple of miles off our port bow. When we got closer it turned out to be a convoy of six big passenger liners in war camouflage. The word got around that the Third Canadian Division was embarked in them—about 12,000 souls that it was up to us to deliver safely in England. That put an end to the scuttle-butt about our special mission on this trip. The four destroyers took up stations one on each bow and quarter of the staggered open column of troop ships. We had a chance to get a good picture of the formation before dark, when we wouldn't be able to see a thing. We'd be running without lights and trying to keep station on the guide by guess and by God.

For several days the North Atlantic was kinder than usual for this time of year, with only occasional fog and moderate following seas so that us destroyer sailors could actually get a hot meal once in a while and sleep some without having to lash ourselves in our bunks. It was an unexpected break. Of course, the troops in convoy didn't even know they were at sea at first, I suppose, the way those big arks plowed along as steady as the Empire State building. They were all 20-knot ships or better so that even with zig-zagging we were making up to 400 miles a day those first four days.

THEN about 300 miles off the coast of Ireland, in the most dangerous stretch of the submarine waters, the North Atlantic began to live up to its fall reputation. This actually increased the convoy's protection against submarines as the heavy seas would be tougher on U-boats than on us, but it also increased the ever-present danger of collision among the ships of the formation as it was necessary to continue zig-zagging during daylight hours regardless of weather. I was standing submarine look-out watches now, one in three, on the wing of the bridge. There were some eight of us on each watch, stationed all over the ship from the crow's nest to the fantail.

The wind had hauled into the southeast, dead ahead, and made up until old *Winnie* was plunging and bucking like a blooded stallion. She'd lunge half her length off a crest and dive dizzily into the trough with a slam that shook her from stem to stern and buried her narrow bow to the bridge. Out on the low bridge-wing I had to hang on with everything but my teeth to keep from being thrown off my feet and hosed overboard by the solid sheets of spray. Rain came on heavy in the squalls and the visibility dropped to less than a thousand yards.

It was next to impossible to see anything through the gray curtain of rain and spray and yet I knew that *Winnie's* old 1917 sound gear would be no help in picking up subs, so it was up to us on look-out. Besides that, we had to keep one eye peeled for the nearest ship in the convoy, almost completely hidden in the mist not more than a mile off our port bow. All she had to do was zig just once when she should have zagged and a plunging gray bow would come knifing clean through us before we knew what hit us. With fog driving over us between rain squalls and the ship pitching and rolling 40 degrees to a side, standing look-out wasn't no circus. The cold alone was enough to make a man tuck in his ears and say the hell with it.

Winnie's station was back on the starboard quarter of the column so that we had the whole convoy wallowing around ahead of us somewhere. All except the *Empress*, a big old Canadian Pacific liner that had had some engine trouble that morning and fallen a couple of miles astern, with one of the other destroyers dropping back to cover her. Every once in a while the visibility would improve enough to see her slamming along with all she had to catch up, but it was now getting along toward five o'clock and I hadn't seen her for a couple of hours.

I WAS searching the bleak wedge of broken sea in my sector when I saw this long streak of foam that was too straight and white to be a wind-streak. I didn't wait to make sure, though. At the top of my lungs I bawled "*Torpedo!*" into the screaming wind; then, "Wake on the port bow, close aboard!" The streak was lancing right for our stern, coming from up ahead and to port, in the direction of the convoy. It must have missed one of the transports and come on through. I thought of the armed depth-charges on our stern and my stomach did a slow roll.

Then the skipper's voice roared, "Both engines ahead full!" and "Full left rudder!" *Winnie* shuddered as the screws took hold. She slammed into a big one, rolling crazily, with the smoke whipping from the two forward stacks as she swung to face the torpedo. Its wake passed squarely under the after deckhouse.

I let out my breath in a whistle. We were heading down the ragged torpedo wake now, bucking ahead to trace it down to its source. Emergency submarine signals snapped at the yard-arms and a one-pounder on the galley deckhouse banged out rapidly a number of times to signal the estimated position of the sub. The whistle screamed the signal also.

The whistling was the only thing that saved us—that and our sudden speed. We were up to 20 knots now, taking terrific punishment from the seas at that speed, when a towering gray bow loomed through the mist close on our port bow. It was the *Empress*, almost back on station. The Old Man, in his haste to run down the torpedo wake hadn't figured on that, I guess. But she'd heard our whistle dead ahead of her in the mist and gathering dark. That high solid bow commenced clumsily to swing away.

"Hard right rudder!" I heard the Old Man's yell. *Winnie* heaved herself up on a crest and rolled into the next trough headed ten degrees farther to starboard. The next sea knocked her back. She careened off the top of it, swinging wildly away again. The *Empress'* bow lunged closer, slapping the seas aside as if eager to get at us. It was right on top of us, towering over the bridge where I crouched and stared almost straight up at it.

Winnie gave a desperate wrench to starboard under her hard-over rudder and came almost to the *Empress'* course. For a moment she lay buried in a trough

right under the liner's bow, knocked down by a smothering sea. Then the old girl shuddered mightily as her screws bit again and she heaved herself up and out of there. Our stern rolled across the big bow by a matter of feet, our wake washing high against it. We were clear.

THE *Empress* stopped her slow swing and shouldered back toward the base course. I looked around for the torpedo wake, searching desperately to forget my fright. The wake was hopelessly lost in the tattered seas and the churn of the two ships' maneuvering. I heard the engine-room telegraph jangle in the pilot-house and the punishing speed slowly came off the ship. We ran well clear of the convoy column, over on the wrong side of it now, dropping astern. The Old Man wasn't going to take another chance on cutting ahead of the *Empress,* again lost in the mist on our starboard beam. He exchanged a few fog signals with the liner and turned to ease back to our station.

Now *Winnie* got the biggest break she ever had. We were wallowing alone astern of the column on our way back to station when I spotted this slim black tube rising out of a trough almost dead ahead of us. It stood up a good six feet, not more than a thousand yards ahead of us. It was a periscope! The sub, tailing the convoy, was taking a look.

"Periscope dead ahead!" I bellowed it toward the pilot-house. Instantly the engine-room telegraph slammed against the stops and *Winnie* vibrated to her full power again. Smoke belched and the fire-room blowers' slow hum sirened to a thin wail.

You could see the periscope revolve as a wave fell away from it again. They'd spotted us. The black tube slipped beneath the waves. But a thousand yards is not much. It was impossible to man our forward gun with the forecastle buried almost constantly under tons of green water, but *Winnie* was beginning to charge ahead. In less than three minutes she had bucked through to the spot where the periscope had disappeared.

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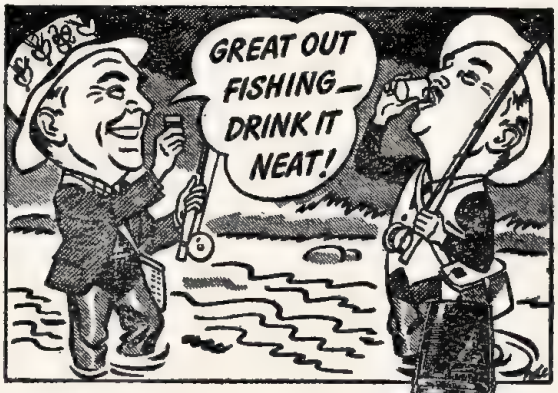

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The depth-charges arced from the Y-gun aft, splashing far out on each side, and rolling out of the racks on the stern. A pattern of four. *Winnie* started her swing, laying four more. The first ones threw white columns of water high out of the broken seas. The others, set for greater depth, heaved big mounds of green water above the surface.

We continued our close circle with hard-over rudder and one engine stopped, slowing to tighten the ring of depth-charges. A swirl of oil broke the surface astern, inside the curve of our wake. A few large chunks of wooden deck-grating bobbed up in it. A great air bubble burst close by, churning the sea white with foam. There was no doubt about it; *Winnie* had smashed her first U-boat. There were cheers from aft, above the howling of the wind, and from the bridge. The Limeys are great ones for cheering.

Winnie pulled out of her death circle and pranced off for her station, snorting out of her safety valves as the cruising speed bell released the need for full steam. She was tossing a solid white mane of spray from her forecastle clean over her bridge.

THE following day we picked up the southwest coast of Ireland about noon, and although the day was dull and the sea still dirty, the green hills looked mighty grand. We ran under the lee of the land a few hours later and the ship began to behave polite again, rolling easy and steaming smooth. We could see the convoy clear and regular now. The *Empress,* last in column, steamed about two miles off our port beam, as we'd opened out our distance with the improved visibility. The big ships were still zig-zagging.

Nice sunset that night, with the Irish Coast dropping astern as we turned in toward Bristol Channel on the last leg to merry old England. Merry to us, anyway, after a week in the North Atlantic, no matter what it was these days to the English. Should be a fine day for making port tomorrow, too, from the looks of that sunset.

The pitch black of the night was just fading to the dirty gray of dawn when I climbed down off the bridge to turn in about 4 A.M. after standing the mid-watch on look-out. The night clouds were already rolling back and a streak of light showing in the east promised a clear, cloudless day. The south coast of Bristol Channel stood silhouetted black and bold against the light in the east, about five miles off our starboard beam. I heaved a big sigh when I hit my bunk and curled down under the blankets. It was good to get my wet shoes off again.

I don't believe I'd been asleep more than a few minutes when the general alarm gong brought me up sitting. On with the wet shoes again and out on deck on the double. The banging of the gong was almost drowned out by the thud of running feet up on deck and the boys rolling out and clearing the compartment below. The blowers were whining up to full speed again, and the ship charging ahead through the calm gray morning.

I was back on my battle station at No. 4 gun before I heard the droning of the planes. Somebody pointed astern and there was a whole flight of them winging out of the dark dawn sky in the west. There must have been a hundred of them, big bombers first, and smaller fighters higher and behind. You could barely make out the cloud of them against the gray sky, but you could hear them clearly enough. Too clearly. It sounded like a noise announcing the end of the world, swelling louder minute by minute.

Winnie was whining and racing in toward the convoy now. The stubby little 3-inch A.A. gun on the fantail just aft of me was manned, loaded, and pointed up. Gunner Snead was there in his shirt-sleeves, with the battle telephones clamped over his ears and the mouthpiece strapped on his chest. He was barking at the gun crew in that crazy Yorkshire lingo of his. He had a wet swab trimmed down to lap out the breech, but I knew it wouldn't help much. She'd jam sure without air pressure to blow her out. It made me feel sort of helpless and desperate. The planes were still out of range astern.

"Anti-aircraft commence firing when target is in range!" The word came

down over the phones from the bridge, and our range talker on No. 4 sang it out. Gunner Snead opened up right away, making a terrific din, but I could have told him he was wasting ammunition at that range. He got off about ten shots in half a minute without even waiting for a burst to correct his aim. Then the breech warmed up and the plug jammed as it always did without an air hose. The bursts were all short. The first planes were almost overhead now. We were right in alongside the troop ships. They were firing, too. They had better A.A. guns and were reaching the planes, or near them. The other destroyers had closed in and were firing, but not hitting anything.

A SECTION of planes broke off and nosed over to dive on us. Snead slammed and kicked at the stuck breech-plug. "*Air!*" I hollered at him above the snarl of the planes. "Get an air-hose!" He glared up at me in black frustration. Our two .50 caliber machine guns forward started to chatter madly, drowning out all else. I jumped down alongside Snead and turned the fire hose on the breech to cool it, spraying Snead and his crew with sea water. He grabbed for the hose. The first bombs landed. Not such big ones; maybe only a couple of hundred pounds. They threw up a lot of water on both sides. Some fragments ripped aboard, tearing metal forward.

Another wave of planes started down. You could hear the scream of them rising, rising, swelling. It was terrifying; worse than the bomb explosions. We couldn't see now, back on the fantail. The ship was laying a smoke screen to cover the transports. The oily black smoke rolled aft and smothered us like a blanket. It turned our sweaty skin black and smarted in our eyes. Snead, looking like a mad coal miner, yanked the hose away from me and shut it off. I slammed the breech with the fire axe. It slid closed on a load. We fired blindly into the hell of rolling smoke at the unholy roar of planes above.

Machine gun bullets spattered on the decks, ripping through where they hit, leaving neat lines of holes, like rivet holes. Bombs blasted astern, ahead, off each side. One roared in the wake close aboard, drowned us in hot sea-water. Fragments whined, ripped through the deck-house behind me. My bare arm felt burned near the shoulder. It was bleeding badly, but not broken. Snead was gone from the gun. I saw him lying on his back by the depth-charge racks with his hip all torn up. I went over and picked up his phones and put them on without a word. There wasn't anything I could say. He tried to get up, but his legs wouldn't work.

There was an explosion amidships, in the engine-room. The scream of escaping steam drowned out even the chatter of our machine guns. Sworls of the hot vapor curled through the black smoke, cooking us. The ship slowed down, swinging lazily. The beat of the screws slowed under us, stopped thumping altogether. The smoke quit abruptly. I rammed home three or four rounds and fired as fast as I could through the steam at some planes roaring in low on our beam. Their wing guns were spitting. You could see the red stabs of the muzzle flame. My shell-man and sight-setter both folded up on deck. The gun-pointer slumped in his harness, his head hanging.

One of the planes passed directly over the ship, only a few hundred feet up. I slewed the gun around, fired the last shot I'd loaded. But the plane swerved, banked, and crashed into the sea, nailed by our machine guns forward. My shot missed. The breech jammed again. I reported the gun out, the crew all wounded, over the phones, and abandoned the useless gun. There were still a half-dozen armed depth-charges in the racks on either side of it that miraculously had escaped hits. I got out of there and returned to No. 4 gun, on the deck-house. None of its crew were hurt. They had been ordered to lie flat as there was no target for the broadside guns.

The steam pouring out of the engine-room had stopped. Someone must have reached a stop valve in the severed steam line. One engine was going ahead now, turning up a single screw faster and faster. *Winnie,* with her decks ripped up

and her superstructure so moth-eaten I hardly recognized her, was still able to get around on one engine. She always was a tough old wench.

THERE were no more planes diving on us, but they swarmed over the convoy. Bomb splashes spouted all around the transports; bigger ones, louder, throwing geysers as high as their boat decks. The *Empress,* abreast of us a thousand yards, caught one forward, right on the bridge. Splinters flew; fire broke out forward on her, leaping aft, licking over the wreckage of the bridge. The big transport started to swing blindly toward us, while we turned away, backing hard to get out of her way.

There was a fight on overhead. British fighters snarled through the melee, chasing the bombers off to the south, hammering them with machine guns that sounded like riveting in the high heavens. No more bombs spouted.

The burning *Empress* circled majestically past our bows as we backed away. Hose played streams of water into the flame, shrouding her crowded decks in steam. The red heart of the fire was already dying out, quickly brought under control, but the transport was stopping, steam roaring from safety-valve vents on her stacks. The sea all around her was flashing iridescent rainbows from oil leaks through her sprung seams. She had been hit hard.

The stricken British transport and the crippled U. S. destroyer lay drifting together, rising and falling gently on the long slick ground swell of early morning. The rest of the convoy steamed up Bristol Channel, diminishing slowly in the distance. The bright sea was littered with drifting wreckage blown from the convoy by the bombs. About a mile to the north, one of *Winnie's* sister ships lay wallowing in the trough of the swell, down by the head, with another of the four-stackers standing by her. Overhead in the depthless blue sky only an occasional plane wheeled. The rest were scattered specks over the green hills to the south. A pair of British destroyers stood down the channel toward the convoy, hull down beyond it yet, and belching smoke in their haste to join up. A great hole gaped in *Winnie's* deck amidships, and the side was blown out almost to the water-line abreast of it. But she didn't appear to be sinking. The pumps must be taking care of most of the water she shipped now and then as she rolled lazily. I felt a wave of pride at the way the old battle-axe could take it.

There was a lot of signaling from the after bridge of the *Empress* now, which was being answered from our bridge. I phoned up to Control and found out the transport was broken down again and wanted to get some of her troops off before she was again attacked. We could only take a hundred or so, but the Old Man was having our whale-boat put over just the same. The rest of our boats, in the cradles amidships, had been smashed to kindling by the bomb we took there.

A number of life-boats jerked down from the liner's davits, though, and pretty soon they were creaking back and forth like a lot of clumsy centipedes walking on the water, spilling grimy troops onto our decks and pulling off for more. I could see other boats plying to the two destroyers to the north, on the other side of her, so they must have been better off than they looked. It couldn't have been more than a half-hour before we'd packed a hundred men below decks and another hundred topside, when the Old Man called a halt and ordered our boat alongside for hoisting in.

WE WERE jammed from rail to rail now with sweating, jostling humanity, and I couldn't help thinking what a mess it would be if we got attacked again like that before we could get out of here. The troops were kept off the gun platforms and the fantail, but they swarmed all over everything else. There was a lot of laughing, like damn fool kids on a picnic, and some loud cracks in the good old American lingo these Canucks spoke about the shameful state that *Winnie* was in, with some good solid American cussing thrown in. It got me how cheerful these poor blokes were out

there with forty fathoms of deep sea still under them, but I guess it was because they didn't realize how close they were to swimming the rest of the way.

For we hadn't no more than just got our boat clear of the water than I heard that hellish droning of motors again. Only it was a deeper drone this time, rising and falling in a strange way like I never heard before. I looked up quick. The sky was a clear, empty blue. Then way down to the south and west I saw them. A dozen little clumps of white spray scattered in a long line across the sea, with the tops of two enemy destroyers rising behind them. The peculiar drone of heavy motors grew louder. Now I could make out small black hulls bouncing in the center of each clump of spray.

Mosquito boats! That meant torpedoes, and plenty of them. *Winnie* was in no shape now to be dodging torpedoes. I eyed the jam of men huddling on our decks and thought of those armed depth-charges on the fantail just below me. Damn Snead, anyway! If we were hit back there now—

"Commence firing, local control," came over the phones, and then, "Gun Four, first three targets on the left."

We'd have to beat them off with the main battery. That was something I could get my teeth into, anyway. That's just what I'd been training on these old 4-inch guns for, all those years. *Winnie* and I had knocked the spots off of smaller targets than these at a mile or so, plenty of times.

"Get on 'em, boys! Range, two one double-o; scale, four two! Stand-by!" The steadiness of my voice surprised me.

"Mark!" yelled the pointer, coaching his trainer on. "Mark-mark-mark!"

Wham!

That's the stuff, let 'em have it.

"Bore clear!"

Heave that shell home. Slam that breech, man! "Ready Two!"

Wham!

Twelve shots a minute. The loading crew were on their toes. The pointing was sweet. Our shells were spouting so close to the lead target it was lost in plumes of white water. Then it was gone. One mosquito boat and two torpedoes less to dodge. Without a hitch the pointers shifted to the next boat, kicking up the sea all around her.

"Down three double-o; left two!" It was better to keep the splashes short, let the boats run into them.

A shell caught the second target square under the bow. You could see the whole boat leap from the sea. There was a blinding flash as her torpedoes exploded in the air. The surface was showered with tiny splashes for several hundred yards around. The boat had disappeared.

"Shift targets!"

But there were too many of them. The remaining boats were launching their torpedoes in a swarm. You could see them hit the water, like marlin leaping. The line of boats swerved away, bouncing and buzzing like angry hornets. Splashes rose around us now as the supporting destroyers opened fire to cover the boats' withdrawal. A geyser rose with a roar close under our bow. On orders from Fire Control we lifted

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our fire to the destroyers, three miles to seaward, and slammed back at them. They were drawing off, racing past us toward the convoy far up the channel, herding the remaining mosquito boats ahead of them like a brood of ducks.

THE torpedoes should be coming soon, their thin white wakes fanning out in a spread to catch the drifting transport and the crowded destroyer and polish them off. With only one engine, and that limping, we had little chance of avoiding the spread; little chance of saving that helpless jam of humanity packed below and everywhere.

Suddenly I saw the wakes of torpedoes to the south. There must have been five or six in the spread. One I looked straight down the length of. It raced directly for our stern. We were swinging too slowly. In a matter of seconds it would hit—back there on the fantail under the depth-charges. If they hadn't been armed there was some chance—but they were. They'd blow the whole over-crowded ship and every one of us clean off the face of the earth.

I glanced aft, saw Gunner Snead trying to pull himself up on the port depth-charge rack. "Torpedo!" I yelled and dropped down to the fantail without thinking. I reached for the emergency release on the nearest depth-charge rack —the starboard—and I yanked the lever. "Torpedo, Snead! Dump 'em!"

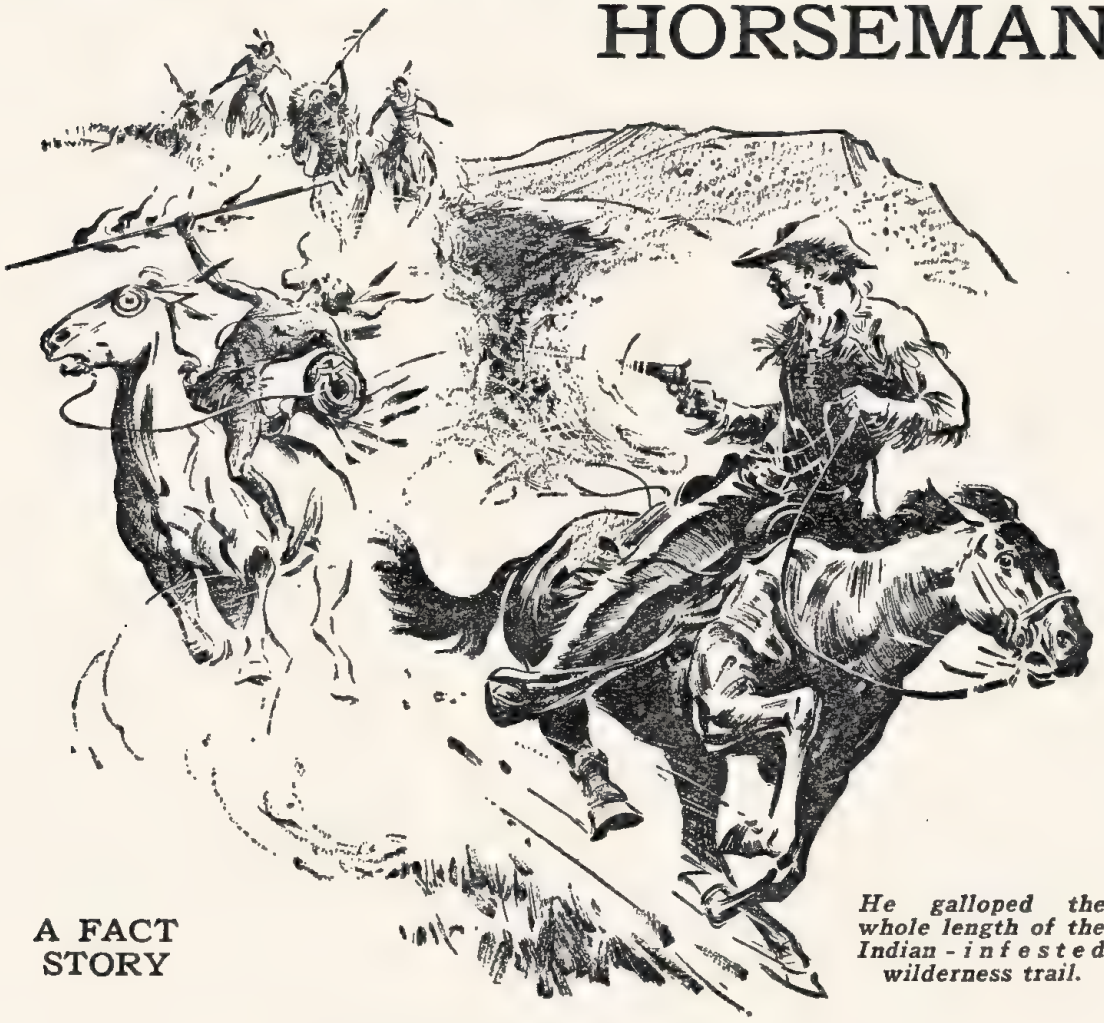
The Gunner looked at me with glazed eyes. He was white and weak. The rest of the A.A. gun crew sprawled motionless on the deck about the gun. I hauled back my lever again, releasing the second charge. Snead seemed to catch on and reached for the port lever, throwing his weight on it once, twice. I couldn't see the torpedo wake from the starboard side. It must be on top of us. I threw my last charge over, jumped for the opposite rack. Snead lay against the lever, gripping it blindly to keep from falling. I tore him off, and dumped the last charge on that side.

Now I began to think. I thought it would be swell to live a while longer. There might be a couple of seconds left. I reached for Snead on the run, got him by the shirt collar, and heaved him up on my back. I continued forward, past the deck-house, one step, two, three, four. There was a horrible roar and the world turned red. That's all I remember . . .

I AM in a hospital now in England, writing down the last of this. *Winnie* lies somewhere on the bottom of Bristol Channel. They tell me that the torpedo blew off her stern as far as the deck-house, but she floated for hours, like the tough old sea-gull she was, until some trawlers took off her troops and her crew—or what was left of us. I'm something of a wreck, myself, but also a hero, they tell me. They're going to give me some kind of a medal for saving a couple of hundred lives when I dumped those depth-charges.

Snead is dead, and I'm sorry. He stopped the splinter that broke my back. I'll be all right in another month or so, according to the doc, and they'll ship me back to the States with a pension. I'll never be able to go to sea again, but I can't say that breaks me up any, now that *Winnie's* gone. Like some one-woman lubbers I know, I was always strictly a one-ship sailor, anyway.

THE WORLD'S FASTEST HORSEMAN



He galloped the whole length of the Indian-infested wilderness trail.

A FACT STORY

By SHERMAN BAKER

IT WAS raining, and the little frontier town of Independence, Missouri, was knee-deep in mud on the night of Sunday, September 17, 1848. From the west came the muffled and irregular sound of hoofbeats, and a foaming, heaving horse staggered into town. In front of the hotel, the rider collapsed, fell off the horse, and was carried into the lamp-lit lobby. The horseman was a little French-Canadian named Aubry, and he had just made a trip on horseback from Santa Fé, New Mexico—eight hundred and thirty miles away—in *five days and sixteen hours!*

Buffalo Bill once said that fifteen miles an hour on horseback would, in a short time, shake any man all to pieces. Anybody who has ever swung in a creaking saddle for days on end knows how wearing the saddle-strain can be, even at an easy pace. But on his famous ride from Santa Fé to Independence, chunky little François Xavier Aubry, not yet twenty-four years old, galloped two hundred miles in twenty-six hours, and averaged, for the whole length of the Indian-infested wilderness trail, one hundred and forty miles a day. To those in this age of cars and planes who have no idea of horse distances in the early West, it is enough to say that the regular Santa Fé traders considered fifty days quick for the trip.

FRANCOIS XAVIER AUBRY, the world's greatest long-distance rider, was born in Quebec, Canada, of French parents, on December 4, 1824. At the age of eighteen, he left his native land to seek his fortune in the exciting, newly opening far West. Wide-eyed, raw, eager, he arrived in St. Louis, then the fast-growing commercial metropolis of the West. He got a job as clerk in a store, but clerking was soon too tame for him. Every day, lean buckskin-clothed men, their faces deeply burnt by the hot suns of the Western wilderness, would come in bearing furs, gold dust, gold nuggets, blood-tingling tales. Something of their excitement for the new country, for the opening up of the great unknown West, communicated itself to the young French-Canadian clerk. In 1846, Aubry fitted out a small trader's wagon train, and set out on the dangerous Santa Fé Trail.

His arrival in Santa Fé made a deep impression on him and young Aubry hastened back to civilization for another load of merchandise.

In his first year as a Santa Fé trader Aubry broke two precedents. He brought home profits of $100,000 in silver coin, and he made two trips instead of the usual one. People began to notice this energetic, dark-eyed youth. The next year Aubry showed his true colors. In August he made his first fast ride. Carrying some mail, he outrode his companions, and reached Independence, Missouri—about two miles east of the present Kansas City—from Santa Fé after a journey of thirty-four days. The last four days of this trip he traveled three hundred miles, averaging seventy-five miles for every twenty-four hours. Late that fall he again trekked his big freight-wagons out on the Santa Fé Trail and, fighting his way through Indians and snow, reached Santa Fé long after all the earlier traders' stocks were gone, and realized big prices for his goods.

Returning from Santa Fé on December 22, 1847, he made his second famous ride. Leaving his empty wagons to return at the regular pace, he started out with five companions. Soon exhausted by Aubry's speed, they dropped out, and Aubry galloped on alone. Attacked by Mexican robbers, delayed by Indians, plowing through deep snow drifts, he killed three mules by hard riding, and reached Independence on January 5, 1848—fourteen days from Santa Fé. This dash of Aubry's was the fastest ride on record between the two places, beating the previous record by over ten days.

He again broke precedent by taking goods out to Santa Fé earlier in the year than anyone had ever done before. He led a train of fifteen wagons from Independence on March 16, 1848, and arrived in Santa Fé on April 21, a few days ahead of his wagons. His return trips from Santa Fé were all unaccompanied by his lumbering, empty wagons, of course.

ON May 19, he left Santa Fé with six hardy frontier riders on his third fast trip. Three hundred miles of Aubry's pace left his companions broken down from exhaustion, and the intrepid little French-Canadian performed the rest of the trip alone. He was attacked again by Indians, had to walk about forty miles, killed three horses and two mules by fast riding, and rode for three days without eating. He galloped into Independence in the splendor of the Western sunrise on May 28, having made the trip in eight days and ten hours. Averaging a hundred miles a day, he beat his own record by over five days. It seemed that human flesh could do no more.

He then freighted another wagon train of merchandise to Santa Fé, and made preparations for another fast return ride. This time he decided to travel the whole way alone. This was to be his supreme effort, and he arranged everything very carefully.

Wagon trains which had supplied Kearny's army were returning eastward, and Aubry selected six good horses, one to be led with each train. The first one started about two weeks before he commenced his dash. For the first stage he was to ride his favorite horse—a blooded mare named Dolly.

As the silver dawn frosted the eastern

rim of the mountains on September 12, 1848, Aubry left Santa Fé on his fourth great ride to Independence. This was his final, world's-record race against time, hunger, rain, cold, exhaustion, and savage Indians. In a long, swinging gallop he raced toward the Great Plains. The empty wagon train traveled ahead of him faster than he had expected, for he did not catch up with it until near Wagon Mound. He halted only long enough to change his saddle to his fresh mount, and to catch up some food, which he ate as he rode.

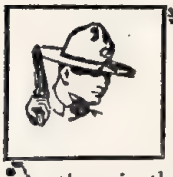
Because of the danger of Indians, the only places Aubry could stop and snatch a few hours of sleep in safety were in the firelight of the evening trail-camps of these empty wagon trains. During the whole dash he made only three halts for that purpose, sleeping only an hour or so at each of these stops. After Wagon Mound he caught up with the next camp at a ford in the Arkansas River near where the present west line of Kansas crosses that river.

Reeling in his creaking army saddle, he traveled day and night. Most of the streams were dangerously swollen with recent rains, and these he swam, holding on to his horse's tail. For six hundred miles the trail was muddy and slippery, and for twenty-four consecutive hours he rode through a cold, driving rain. Altogether he ate but six meals.

Horseback, eight hundred and thirty miles in five days, sixteen hours! At the old Noland House in Independence, Aubry gulped down ham, eggs and coffee, and told the proprietor to wake him in three hours. The hotel man allowed him six hours, and then awakened him. Aubry was furious. Three hours were all he needed, he exclaimed. He immediately boarded a steamer for St. Louis, and arrived there on September 21, and presented his proofs of his ride to the editor of the local newspaper. There were many thousands of dollars bet on this ride. Aubry collected every penny.

HE KEPT on as a Santa Fé trader for a few years more, then became an explorer of the unknown trails of the West. In 1852 he drove the first sheep from Santa Fé to California, and in 1854 he drove a wagon along the 35th parallel, stirring up the government to make further explorations and finally establish a wagon route for the emigrants to California. Today Aubry's trail is followed in a general way by the Santa Fé railroad from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Bakersfield, California.

The world's fastest horseman was killed in a fight in Santa Fé on August 18, 1854, and was buried at the parochial church in the city he loved so well. Aubry was only twenty-nine years old when he died, but his fame had spread over the entire country, and even today his name is still celebrated. Here and there in the Southwest the present-day traveler can come upon towns, valleys, forts, and mountains bearing the name of this hot-blooded, wiry little pioneer.



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Shouldering their halberds, they escorted the naked yokels about the square.

OF PENITENCE

A CARADOSSO STORY

By F. R. BUCKLEY

To the Most Reverend Father in God, my Lord Bishop of Costecaldo; from Luigi Caradosso, sometime Captain of the Guard to Their Lordships of Rometia, these in haste:

Reverendissimo Signore:

If anyone shall tell Your Eminence that I menaced yesterday's preacher at the Cathedral, may Your Grace be humbly advised that he lies in his gullet; probably coveting this cabbage-patch of mine, or envying my little pension. Is it to be believed that at fourscore years of age, with one foot on this earth and the other in eternal glory, I should be periling both toe-holds by violence to a friar? Nay; what I said to Fra

Matteo (after *he* had threatened our young Duke Pietro II with hell-fire for dressing fashionably) was *not* that I would cut *his* throat, but only that I had seen men's throats cut *for less.*

And if, as liars may assert, I drew my dagger—'twas but to point the heads of my discourse; as, *imprimis*—

But I had rather tell Your Reverence simply what befell my first guard-captaincy—at Nola, whither I went after Venice had spoiled my trade as a free-lance, and where I first met the great Duke Pietro II of Rometia, whom God receive.

Now, of course, Nola and Ferrante are part of the Rometian domain; but in 1530 their lord was Roberto Farinacci—a youth much like our present Duke Pietro IV, and much of the same age.

Indeed, 'twas amid the preparations for his lordship's twenty-first birthday that I arrested Adolfo Illeri; speaking from a barrel-top, he was—one of the barrels of wine to be put in the fountain. And, being still in traveling garb and unknown in the town, I was able to watch and listen to the lout some time before taking action. Certes, he was worth watching; only man ever I saw that could have fits without losing consciousness.

"What's here?" I asked my neighbor in the crowd; an old man with a furred robe and the face of one who tastes vinegar.

"Hach!" says he, spitting on the ground. "A question! A damned plasterer 'tis—wants to be a leader of the people, like what's-his-name at Florence. Finds talking easier than daubing an honest wall, I'll be bound."

"Look about you!" screams the fellow on the barrel. "See the wicked waste! Behold the godless wreaths and statuary—paid for with your tears and sweat!"

"Y'see—we've no guard-captain in this town," says the old man. I'd been appointed but that morn.

"No?" says I, tightening my belt and wishing I were armed.

"Died of fever. So ever since, this fool hath been bellowing thisaway. Not even a townsman. Hear that Brescian brogue!"

I have oft wondered why those who'd tell folk how to live in one country should usually come from some other. 'Tis strange; though not so strange as the faculty folk have for believing manifest lies if shouted.

I mean—the wine this Illeri was denouncing; the wreaths and the banners, the balcony whence milord would fling money on the morrow, were all for the pleasure of these people in the crowd; and yet as this foreigner bawled and yelled, behold them rocking to and fro on their heels and saying "Aye, aye!" and "True, true!" as though he were saving them from purgatory.

"The old lord would have cured his accent for him," says my neighbor, twisting his head on one side and gurgling.

"Gallows? Nay," says I. "Pot-house politics—that's all."

" 'A started in pot-houses, but they'd have none of him; and now—hark!" cries my neighbor.

Aye—there was cause for hearkening; because this Illeri had become as it were drunk on his own words and now, eyes rolling and foam flying from his lips, was demanding of the people how long they'd endure oppression; when they would arise and demand their rights—the which, being treason, called for an answer not from them, but from me.

I pushed therefore through the crowd and came to the barrel, around which were grouped some few fellows whose looks liked me not. And their manners still less; for may it be believed that when I took their leader's ankle, causing him to fall from his perch in mid-sentence, one of them knew no better than to strike me with a dagger? Fie; a native townsman too; left a widow and two children. And there was another—twice imprisoned for robbery, I found after—who might better have been at confession than hacking at my shoulders with a sword; died in his sins.

For I would not have Your Reverence consider me either a bloody man or a mere target; freely I received and freely gave. 'Twas a little coat of chain mail

I chanced to have on, that turned aside the first two blows; but thereafter the rogues started hewing at my head and legs and I must do my best with the dagger snatched from the first fellow and what cobblestones I could pick up from the street. It was with a cobblestone that I discouraged one man with a great cutlass, and with the dagger that I changed the mind of him who was drawing a Pistoia gun out of his doublet. As for the fellow who made the most fuss, writhing around my feet and howling—I had but kicked him, albeit shrewdly; so it may be seen that as far as 'twas humanly possible I had eschewed violence, my only aim being to take this Illeri to my lord.

And so I did, without much further difficulty; expecting naught but that the fellow would be handily hanged and that I should be able to take my boots off—I'd a Venetian lance-wound in the foot, and it ached.

But his lordship was in no such hurry; nay, leaving a party of young nobles still laughing and joking in the great hall, he went to his cabinet and ere I led the prisoner in had donned his robe of signory as if there were question of trying the fellow!

Not only was there, moreover; but when I told how this Adolfo had called His Excellence a leech and counseled the people to cast off this sucker of their blood, he asked the prisoner whether or not 'twas true—as if the charge had been no more than a common murder.

"N-n-nay, Sire," says Illeri—a deal less fluent than he had been in the great square. "I—I—"

"Born here?" says Roberto.

"B-B-Brescia, Your Grace. Under favor—"

"Witnesses, Captain?" says my lord, briskly.

Witnesses! A thousand—but where were they? Dragging Messer Illeri across the square, I had gently advised his audience to disperse, and they had done so—running. Was I now to go hunt them in highways and byways?

"Gracious Lordship—" whines this Illeri.

"Well?"

"If—if I confess—some hasty words—I am a poor man—afflicted in the nerves—"

"That shall be considered in due time," says Roberto gravely. "Meanwhile, I must protect the peace of my citizens. Detain the prisoner, Captain; seek witnesses, and send for any he desires. I will judge the case on Monday. Dismissed!"

This was about twenty o'clock on Friday evening—already getting on for sunset. Tomorrow was his lordship's birthday, the next day would be Sabbath—a fine time to be looking for approvers! Yet 'twas the prisoner who groaned; as if he'd been condemned to a dungeon for his life. And my lord looked at him with pity!

"See that he is well treated, Captain," says he; and so the rascal was—taking his ease in a cell with a window, while I limped through next day's festivities with foot aflame. The finding of witnesses I had left to my lieutenant, Bertuccio; and it eased neither of our aches (Bucca had an arquebus ball in the leg) to learn that after all his night-walking, pulling of citizens out of bed, Illeri would not be hanged for all his guilt.

"I am no tyrant, Captain," says my young lord, "nor—thou a *condottiere* any more, Luigi."

Tossing a mag of small coins from hand to hand, he smiled at this, and I essayed to do likewise. God, in what harder ways have I earned my bread, than by fighting! Laughing at princes' jests is one of 'em; explaining the merit of my good deeds (as herein) is another.

"Sith he is no citizen," says my lord, " 'twill suffice to give him a week on bread and water and send him back to Brescia."

"But if he returns, Sire?"

"A month in jail—and send him back again. Which minds me—thou knowest no prisoner is to wear ball and chain?"

I saluted.

"Good. And now—"

"Dost feed 'em pheasants, Roberto?" asks one of his noble friends; and they all laughed.

"—and now," repeats my lord, who had but smiled, "I'll walk through the square among the people, Captain—without a guard."

"Better throw the money from the balcony, first," says the youth who had japed about the pheasants. He had been well brought up, that lad. But so had I. Guardless (as I had foreseen) Roberto went among his people that day; but there were falconets mounted in windows at the four corners of the square and the people knew it.

SO, I found, did His Grace of Rometia, who rode over with compliments in the afternoon; which I deemed strange —not knowing Pietro II. He had robbed no one yet, God rest him; so that his fame had not spread very far.

"A popular young lord thou hast, Captain," says the Duke, fixing his red eyes on the window where one gun was. He turned and stared straight at the curtain masking another. "Wonderfully beloved—"

And so he fitted a phrase to each cannon, and ended by grinning at me.

"I passed the *Bargello* on my way," says he. Roberto was flinging more money to the crowd, as innocent as the babe unborn. "There was no one hanging from the window-bars, though, Captain."

I licked my lips and saluted.

"Know how to hold thy tongue, eh?" says the Duke, partly to himself. "Well —I hope thou may have no trouble, Luigi Caradosso. But—"

That he should know my name amazed me then; but how the devil could he have known of trouble that did not bud till that night, flower till the next day, or fruit till two months later? Perhaps he did not, for all the shrug with which he walked away. Or perhaps—

Certainly His Grace was at home in Rometia or ever my lord ceased throwing forth handfuls of silver, drinking noggins of foul fountain-wine with his subjects and sate down to sup with his friends. Certainly Pietro II must have been in the land of dreams—and what dreams must his have been!—before Roberto III and his guests began to sing love songs, donned masks and false noses of bawdy shape and sallied forth to fight the watch.

'Twas then the accepted sport of noble youth; but (following this band of gentles unbeknownst) methought the sport in Nola would be poor. The watch was not, of course, the guard; it was a night-patrol of weather-bawlers, commanded by a sort of sergeant, armed with pikes and halberds for the look of things and usually half drunk and t'other half asleep.

This night, having drunk more than usual, these louts must needs leave their side-streets and come into the square; where the folk were still milling about—those who could still stand up, that is—and where my lord and his friends in false-face were merrily awaiting them. I have seen bloody watch-fights, of course—and been in 'em; but this, I assure Your Reverence, was the purest of fun. One of the young lords lost a finger or so and another had his head cut open—but when they would have taken order with the *sbirri,* my young lord Roberto said them sternly nay.

"They've their—*hic*—duty to do," says he, leaping gravely on the back of the sergeant. "Take their hose off!"

Which they did, Your Grace, and the rest of their uniforms too; thereafter shouldering their halberds and escorting the naked yokels about the square. 'Twas summer; the fellows had their shirts; and stap me if I saw any harm in the affair—unless it be blasphemy to shout: "Twenty-three o'clock and the Day of Judgment!"

That was all they did, and the crowd roared with laughter, and so did I, despite my wounded foot; which by next morning had so swollen that when his lordship went to church—to hear a wandering friar of great renown—I must stay in bed while Bertuccio Bucca commanded the guard.

It was from him—his room opened off mine—that I heard what had befallen; as he was hanging up his armor.

"*Dio mio!*" says he, wagging his head to excite my curiosity. "Is it possible! The things one lives to see! Lord, lord! Hast any wine in here, Luigi?"

He sat down and wiped his face and buried it in a tankard.

"Well?"

"Well," says he, "how'd thou like to be called a libertine, Messer Caradosso; and a drunkard, a lecher, a breaker of the law, a seducer of youth—"

" 'Twould be nothing new."

"Aha—but in thine own city," says Bertuccio, cocking his eye at me. "To the very face—oh, and a defiler of the Sabbath. Before thine own subjects—eh, Luigi?"

"Fool!"

"Seems I must be," says Bertuccio, nodding, "for *I'd* thought this young lord of ours a trifle too godly. But who shall contradict Holy Church?"

"Ye mean—this friar—"

"For an hour or more," says Bertuccio, triumphant, " 'a damned his lordship to his face, there in Santa Maria—because of that prank last night, thou knowest? Especially the false noses. Church full of rabble—all ears. Aie, what a birthday sermon!"

"And his lordship?"

Bertuccio looked down into his flagon, swashing the wine around and around.

"Well, Luigi, thou knowest," says he, "a plough-mare or a mule may be flogged and work the better for't; but the race-horse that's bitted too hard, even—"

"What befell?" I demanded, looking for something to throw.

"—either his spirit is broken," maunders Bertuccio, seeing I had naught, "or he becometh vicious. I mind I had a battle-charger once, time I was serving with Giuliano—"

AT a footstep, he turned toward the door and next moment avenged me on himself. Because there stood my lord Roberto, in his black velvet as he had come from church; and Bertuccio, caught all undressed and shocked into trying to salute, did so with the hand that held the pot and so threw red wine in his own face. For all my lord's presence and the pain in my foot, I must laugh as he scuttled into his room dripping (and with no more to drink)—but his lordship did not even smile.

Pale and with tight lips he took a chair and for a minute sat there with his hands dangling, silent. O there was no doubt which way the whip of oratory had driven him; as I have said, he was young—and while the whipped yearling may bite and lash out with his hoofs, it is otherwise with a foal.

"What o'clock was't when we fought the watch?" says he in a dull voice.

"Sir, I know not."

"The preacher this morning said we broke the Sabbath."

"Was he there?"

"Nay. But the people murmured as if they agreed."

"Not a man-jack in the square could tell the time, Your Worship!"

"Nor could I," says Roberto, burying his face in his hands. Ah, Your Reverence, we hear much nowadays of the self-sureness of youth; impudence, some call it—but I have yet to find the youngster that may not be put down by age or the appearance of authority.

And the finer the lad, the greater the fall thereof.

"At all events," says my lord, getting up and pacing to and fro, "I was drunk—wearing a false nose like a mountebank and assaulting mine own guard."

"Nay, Sire. 'Twas but the watch."

"Silence!"

Poor boy, his face was all twisted with self-doubt. What a change from the upright young judge of before-yester! And having roared at me, he now did worse.

"Captain," says he, "release yon Illeri."

"Illeri, my Lord?" I gasped. "But—"

"Release him, I say! It seems—he told—no more than the truth about me."

"Without trial, Sire? After we've found the witnesses and all?"

"Let him go. Forthwith. Who am I to judge my fellow man?"

Well, Your Reverence, who is anyone, so to do? But if none did it, what would become of the world?

"But—"

"No buts! . . . Lieutenant!"

In comes Bertuccio, dressed but for the lacing of his stomacher and looking sheepish.

"Release the prisoner Illeri."

"And escort him to the border, Your Highness?" says I, as poor Bucca's jaw dropped.

"Let him go where he will."

"With prohibition on speaking to assemblages, Signore?" says I, trying to save something from the wreck.

But Roberto shook his head as though thinking of other matters—his salvation or some such, alack!—and stalked from the room, Bertuccio following.

"Laughed in my face," says he, returning after ten minutes. "A damned trowel-pusher. Mocked me to my beard. What will he tell his dupes about this, Luigi? And who'll dare lay finger on the fellow henceforth? We'll have rebellion on our hands—and I wanted to take leave and go see my old mother."

"There's Fate," says I. "At Milan, I remember just such a fellow was stabbed in a back street; at Ferrara, just such another fell down a well—doubtless while gazing at the stars. And at Jesi, did not one wander into a dungeon and pull the door to behind him and starve to death before he was found?"

"That was what the Cardinal said."

"Meseems that rather than spoil a fine young lord, and set us fighting with our wounds still raw," says I, "Heaven might send this Brescian bastard some mishap."

"True, true," says Bertuccio, thoughtfully. "So it might."

BUT nay, not so; for that Master Illeri withdrew himself eftsoons from city to country, there preaching the wrath of God (and a taking off of the salt-tax) from dunghill to dunghill all the way to Ferrante.

And, 'ods teeth! After a week or two, my lord repealed the tax, causing me to discharge twenty guardsmen; a week later still, he recalled the impost on fireplaces—and meantime the tale of his luckless exploit grew and grew until it crossed borders and other Counts japed Roberto at the Council of Nobles.

All save Pietro of Rometia; who ever took a grave view of everyone's sins but his own. I can see him now, presiding at a Council with his hat on, a little leaden saint-medal in full view and his under-lip thrust forward like a scoop.

"Such things bring discredit on nobility," says he, flickering his red-rimmed eyes around the board. "Very bad, gentles."

Now his eyes rested on me, behind Roberto's chair; and for the instant methought he grinned. But the next instant, I saw I must have mistaken; never was such an inauspicious face.

"I—I—" says my unhappy young lord.

"The Council is adjourned," says His Grace, rising.

So Roberto would go no more to meetings of his own kind; he was chary of his own subjects now; he believed that this wearing of a false nose had cut him off from his Maker, and he moped about the castle like a sick owl while I paid rustic spies out of mine own pocket (thanking God that treachery between poor man and poor man comes so cheap) and wrestled mightily with what was left of the guard.

What a summer that was!

Persuaded of his own unworthiness (which, when a man once doubts, there are plenty to help him—I mean, help him to doubt it still more) milord passed on all judgment to the city magistrates; each of whom favored his own faction and by each decision ranged the loser against milord. One of 'em decided—unjustly, for a wonder—against our bankers, who at once packed their shekels and left town. That interfered—God knows how!—with trade; the townsfolk murmured; the country folk were protesting the tax on wine—

Well—'twas sternly forbidden now, to make any show of military force; but we must needs go outside the city walls to exercise and I took care to ride the troops through as many streets as possible, on the way. Moreover, the horses must be exercised, so that Bertuccio and I managed to patrol the countryside pretty well; training our men to charge in openwork formation, which is useful against picks and scythes.

The yokels, though sullen, seemed properly impressed, and I was hoping that Bertuccio might visit his mother while I refrained from visiting mine (she being in Heaven) when on a bright afternoon, my lord sent for me and to my amaze showed me a letter from

Adolfo Illeri. I say amaze, because rat me if the wretch, so lately stuttering and blanching, was not writing to His Serenity now, in the manner of one prince to another!

Oons! He rehearsed the taxes which had been repealed—and the seignorial customs that had been abolished; I forget what they were—but, dating himself from the town of Ferrante, he demanded more still. Presenting divers considerations of sin against His Lordship, he said the principal merchants of that place were at one with him and that if my lord did not forthwith desist from keeping "a great army to batten on us the people and oppress us withal"—they would declare themselves a republic.

I am no ghost-seer, Your Reverence; but for an instant I swear I saw the face of Pietro II, there before me on the paper; as when he'd glanced my way at the Council.

"Well?" says Roberto.

"Well, Sire—" I meant, that this was a fine device to throw honest men out of employ; but of course I could not give this as reason for the hotness of my face. "Meseems—if it may be permitted—"

"Speak like a man!" says milord; to a soldier, mark you!

"Well, Sire—meseems that if Ferrante hath a republic in mind despite the army, once the army's gone 'twill be a republic in fact."

He nodded.

" 'Twas a republic before my father—stole it."

Oons, what a word!

"But, Sire—following that example, Nola itself might turn against Your Highness. Already this Illeri hath debauched the countryside; friends of mine report—"

"Friends? Spies. Eh? Spies! What is lordship, if I must keep it by aid of such vermin?"

"Better than the rule of yon Illeri," I made bold to say; but he shook his head and put his hands over his eyes.

"Venice is a republic," says he," Florence too. I think the age of tyrants is passing, Luigi."

"But Your Lordship is no tyrant!"

"So I thought," says he wearily, "but there be others that think otherwise, it seems. And what tyrant ever knew himself to be such?"

HA! I could have told him of a dozen who gloried in it—I mean, beside the half-dozen that had been murdered. But there was no talking to him, he had lost faith in any who should tell him comfortable news.

"I must think—I must think," says he, rising and pacing the floor. "That friar is here again, Luigi; at the convent of Santa Maria. I sent for him to come and advise me, but he would not. He is to preach tomorrow. I will go."

Corpo di Bacco—if he was thus after one sermon, methought, what would he be after another? Little I knew, thank God—I was to have one more night's sleep untroubled.

"Dismissed," says his lordship dully. "And—Luigi, if any other service is offered thee—"

My heart sank; 'twas to be seen he had made up his mind; did not even finish his sentence—waved his hand and looked haggard at me as I withdrew.

But, I thought *I* would command the guard to church on the morrow; would stand at his lordship's right hand, two men's lengths from the pulpit and would try whether the human eye could indeed quell wild beasts. Not that this friar was any such, Your Reverence, being indeed a most godly and well-meaning man; but at the moment he was more perilous to me than any lion—and not only to me, as it turned out, alas!

Well—so busy was I next morning, trying to eye him basilisk fashion, that it was some time ere I noted what he was saying; and then 'twas a sudden move of my young lord's that broke the spell.

And behold! Quite contrary to his former sermon, the friar now was demanding of my lord why he was *not* acting lordly; why he had denied the common folk their junketing on their saint-day (there'd been no money); why he withdrew himself from his subjects' sight, permitting this wicked Illeri (he'd

seized back tithes from a monastery, I'd heard) to lead simple folk astray; why lands acquired by my lord's good father and grandfather before him were being allowed to slip back into misrule and disorder—

"Aye, aye!" moaned the congregation; just as they had at the former sermon, according to Bertuccio; just as they had when Illeri bawled at them that day in the great square.

Suddenly, his lordship arose; and I perceived he had become even paler than of late—but with a different kind of pallor. Aye—now he was white with fury and his eyes were blazing; moreover meseemed that from between clenched teeth he had hissed forth an oath. There in church!

He stood for a moment, looking at the friar, who paused in his discourse and looked back at him; he swept with his gaze the navefull of folk; and then with a short laugh he threw his chair over and started down the aisle toward the west door.

I was behind him, that should have been in front—he went so quickly; so that when one of the commonalty got in the way, 'twas my lord himself who jostled the fellow backward—and so roughly that he fell broad on his back. And when we were out in the sunlight, what does he do but curse me roundly and say I must earn my pay or leave his service.

"Damned if I do—damned if I do not!" says he wrathfully, as I helped him to his horse. "Well, damn them, they shall see damnation! Forward at the trot!"

Such was the measure of his youth, Your Reverence—making so much use of one word and that a very poor one. But formerly, he would not have sworn at all; it was evident (as I told Bertuccio Bucca that evening) that the foal had grown up, and at new spurring was ready to lash out.

Just as I said the which, came a servant in haste to the door of my quarters saying: "Captain to His Lordship at once!"

"Aye—lash out," says Bertuccio heavily. "With us for hoofs."

And so it seemed.

ROBERTO was pacing the floor again, as flaming-wrathful as he had been wet-woebegone before; the flagstones were strewn with the fragments of yon letter from Illeri—and my orders were that we should march against Ferrente the next morning.

"I should have hanged him before," says my lord, kicking at the torn paper. "Well—I'll do it now."

"With all humility, Sire—"

"Well?"

"'Tis now another matter, this hanging."

I meant that to come at Illeri, we should have to cut our way through the dupes he'd had time to gather—the poor folk his lordship had judged so gently and chained so lightly, aforetime; but he cut me short.

"Afraid, Messer Captain?"

"Under favor, no, Sire." And some other fellow in my skin—a furious man was he—added the words: "Neither of foe nor friar."

Roberto glared at me.

"So *I'm* the coward!" says he; oons, there was no accusation that would not have pricked him then—had I called him an Ethiopian he must have disproved it, instead of putting me on bread and water in good lordly style. "Then know, my fine fellow, that 'tis I who'll lead the assault, if there be one. Stay thou behind with twenty men, and see my loving subjects here stab me not in the back."

But that might not be; no, no.

"Am I to know of Your Worship's valor only by hearsay?" I inquired therefore; risking my neck in a way I was not paid for—just as I've risked it with spoiled horses, now I bethink me.

He winced, poor lad.

"So is my credit sunk, ha?" he muttered to himself. "Aye—let thy lieutenant stay behind; there may be need of thee before the finish. Dismissed!"

"I spoke in haste, my Lord—"

"Dismissed!" he shouts at me. "Art thou to blow hot and cold, too? Words, words, words! Damnation! Dismissed!"

Yes—and my words had done damage, also, God forgive me; because next day, when we should have taken some

roundabout route to deceive Illeri's spies, naught would please my young lord in his wrath but that we take the high road to where yon wretch was recruiting pitch-fork infantry. Everyone knew our destination—I remember seeing, as we jingled out of the north gate, a Rometian merchant with his eyes agog. Merchant! Ha!

There was naught to be found in the countryside, of course—save peasants poking at their fields; they would not poke at us until we had passed, and they could take us in the rear. I said something of this to my lord Roberto, but he could think of naught save Adolfo Illeri—who had retired to Ferrante, of course; closed the gates, rung the bells backward and—there we were; faced with a siege.

No tents with us; no provisions—nothing; and the rustics prowling about ready to cut our throats if so be we went to sleep on the bare earth.

"There be such things as sentries," says my lord, when I put these matters also before him. "Is a bivouac of one night too much for my brave *condottiero?*"

"One night!" says I, looking at the town walls.

"One night. Tomorrow," says his lordship grimly, "we will try some few fireworks, captain. After dark, have the guns readied; bring them all forward to point at the main gate. Have we plenty of powder?"

"Plenty, Sire, but such light cannon—"

"I shall need six bags on't," says Roberto, explaining no further; but when dawn came and I paraded the troop, nothing could be clearer than his intention, alas!

Eminence—he was going to blow the gate in; he was going to do it himself; all my second lieutenant had to do with his guns was to sweep the battlements so that townsfolk might not drop hot lead or cold rocks; my aid was confined to the charge after the gate should be down—and his lordship would brook no argument.

Nor did he ask for volunteers to aid in this dreadful emprise; went down the front rank rapping men on the breastplate at random and saying "Thou—and thou—and thou—"; so they dismounted, poor lads, and laid aside their weapons all but knives; crossed themselves, took each his bag of powder and stood pale-faced, ten paces apart, as ordered.

ROBERTO had a bag of powder like the rest; moreover the fuses and the flint and steel. And now for the first time he seemed happy—like his old self.

He came to my stirrup. Gone were the megrims; gone the fury also.

"Well, Luigi Caradosso!" says he, sober-like.

Such a fine young man! Very like a racehorse; more like still to our young Duke Pietro IV, whom God preserve!

"Your Highness," says I, "think again!"

He looked at the town, and then at the six men with the powder-bags; and he seemed troubled; shook his head.

"I have—thought too much," says he slowly. "Now—*quando si è in ballo, bisogna ballare;* the ball is opened, we must dance. But if I see thee no more—remember—"

Your Reverence sees that I have remembered; all these fifty years; that is why I spoke to the friar so bluntly yesterday.

"*Avanti!*" says his lordship to the powder-carriers; and forward, at the dog-trot, they went. And then of course the guns on the town battlements began to fire and our light pieces to answer them; and I to ride about getting my troops into column—and then there was a great explosion and a vast flash of flame in the mist ahead of us and behold! where there had been six of my men and his lordship there were now but five and a pillar of smoke. So the sparing of Illeri's neck had cost one innocent life already.

Then two of our *dragonetti* spoke together and a whole crenellation of the battlements over the gate flew into dust and jagged fragments, and there was a wide gap in the black line of defenders atop the wall. My second lieutenant was an ingenious lad; he had thought that if two guns fired a shot with a chain between them, there would fly

through the air a whirling flail of death —and he was quite right. I saw one such shot encompass half a dozen men and cut them in twain; the eyeletted balls being those which his lordship had ordered knocked off the ankles of prisoners, as I told before. Which shows that what will be, will be; even with ironmongery.

Two more men were down in his lordship's party—but I had business of mine own. Charging in column was not to the taste of my men—who thought, beside, that they would shortly be lordless—and there was some little stabbing ere I could persuade fifty men to ride in the van. Their duty—with me at their head—would be to ride full tilt into the gateway, to give the shock; then, if we were so shot down that our bodies blocked the path, 'twould be for the rest to dismount and climb over us as infantry.

While I was explaining the which, there was another great explosion; and from the tail of mine eye, I saw that two more men of the storm-party had been blown up by their burdens. His lordship and the man remaining were still not under the protection of the walls, but the fire had died down very much, because our chain-shot had cleared the gate-battlements and dismounted two flanking petronels. There were few arquebuses in the town, it seemed, and shooting catacorner around stonework with arbalests is ticklish business; natheless, some rascal made a lucky shot and the last of his lordship's common companions threw up his arms and fell. That made six lives paid for the mercy to Illeri; I resolved not to count any more—nor add up the halves of the townsfolk who had met those chain-shot.

That last man had been carrying two bags—his own and one snatched from a comrade who'd been killed without being blown into blood-mist; now I saw Roberto turn, add these two bags to his proper load and stagger forward alone toward the gate.

My troops were in order by this time —I had naught to do save watch; and I will inform Your Reverence that in all my years of battle and sudden death,

THE RED DUKE

I have not often had my heart so near my gizzard as during the next few minutes. They seemed like hours—the powder-bags were heavy and his lordship (as I have said) was not built like a beast of burden. Two or three times he fell—and rose again with the crossbow bolts flittering about him like moths; on he went—now the bolts were behind him—he was under the walls, by God—I see him now, laying down the bags and piling against them the stones blown down from the battlements, to give the powder force.

He had trouble with his flint and steel and fuse, judging by the length of time he was crouched over that heap of destruction—little figures of townsfolk came running to the ruined gate-house to shoot at him through the machicolations; but my lieutenant let fly with another of his flails and away went those unhappy rebels like dust before a broom. He joined his hands and jumped up and down for joy, did the lieutenant; he too was very young.

"The match is lit!" shouts a man in the ranks behind me—and for once I let discipline go. Yes—his lordship was running; I prayed he'd remember to keep close to the walls, and so he did; got to the far side of one of the round towers and flattened himself against the stone-work.

"Draw swords!" I shouted to the troop; and there was a rasp of steel in the silence. Our gunners were stand-

ing like men petrified, their port-fires in their hands—there was a lark singing high over head—nothing happened—the match must have gone out—his lordship was halfway back to the powder-bags when there came a roar like the end of the world, a sheet of flame like some giantess' fan and an upgush of black smoke with splinters at the edges on 't.

"Forward! Charge!" I gave the order, scarce able to hear mine own voice for the ringing in mine ears; but I put my horse in motion, first at the trot and then at the gallop and the men followed me.

O SIR what hath war become since the alchemists and the monks (saving your presence) began to mingle in't! In my young soldiering, a cavalry-charge had been a thing to make the heart beat faster for the time—even if 'twere stilled forever afterwards. But this one was like a ride into the mouth of hell—darkness, the stink of sulphur and underfoot and all about flaming shards of wood to make the horses rear. I knew when I was in the town only by the soft feel of bodies underfoot; and drove toward the city square through a fog that the blessed sun could turn but to a sickly yellow.

There was no time to look for my young lord—my work, as I saw it, was to find Illeri and hang him as soon as possible, so that order might be restored and no more lives sacrificed for his. Despite my resolve, I was still counting—a boy's body here; there, a poor woman lying face-down on the cobblestones—but our rebel, I knew, would be in the square, ringed by followers who'd fight for their freedom second, but for his hide first.

And there he was, to be sure—on the steps of the column Ferrante had raised to mark my lord's accession; and there was my lord himself, rushing at Illeri's bodyguard with a great two-handed sword.

He must have picked it up as he ran inward from the gate; and, being a gentleman, he knew not in the least how to use the same. Instead, I mean, of letting the blade-tip rest on the ground and mowing at his adversaries' ankles, he was raising the weapon on high and chopping downward; menacing but one man at a time and leaving his whole bosom unguarded. As I spurred toward him, I saw one of the men about Illeri leap forward and thrust with his rapier—but, seemingly, he missed; my lord leaped back, and the next instant his attacker was beyond such foolery. He had gone to join his loved ones in the hereafter, Your Reverence—and I hope they had no trouble in knowing him without a head.

"Touch not Illeri!" someone was shouting behind me; but blows are not dealt by apothecaries' measure, I could not be sure that the voice was my lord's, and in any case, had I not seen what came of dealing reasonably with the unreasonable?

One thing I will say for Messer Adolfo—he had a very convenient neck; long, lean and not too bony. I snipped him as one might a poppy by a garden-walk, shouted to my men to mount the head where 'twould make a good showing and rode on to discourage our dismounted men from looting. They were Ferrante men themselves, many of 'em; but when one's peering through powder-smoke, 'tis hard to recognize a friend.

There was some little trouble in the side-streets, but I quelled it; there were still folk with arbalests on the walls—but they laid them down when I mounted Illeri's head atop the column; and at last I climbed the tower of the citadel to mark where fires had broken out in the town.

There were some three or four—but, Your Eminence, I paid them little heed. For, looking down upon the *enceinte* of the city and upon the gate that had been blown open—I perceived that into it was crawling the likeness of a scarlet dragon, whose tail I could not see.

But, turning, I saw that its head was already in the square—a head with steel scales on't; and my spine froze and my hair prickled, because this dragon was made up of men; men in the uniform of the Red Duke—aye, Pietro II of Rometia; and there was himself, sitting his white horse and looking up at

the head of Adolfo Illeri on the column.

My lord Roberto was not to be seen from that height—I saw him not even when I stood before His Grace, nigh to the heap of dead by the column's steps; but when Pietro asked me where he was and I answered, I knew not, a hand clutched my ankle and pressed it.

I looked down.

Aye; there lay he, face down—until I stooped and took him in my arms and saw that the townsman had struck better than he would ever know.

His lordship smiled at me; then he saw the corpses around him and his face changed. To sorrow; and his mouth twisted and he tried to speak.

"Alas—" I think he said, and then his eyelids fluttered and he gave up the ghost.

"Ha. Pity," says the voice of Pietro from above me. "Captain!"

I should have liked to say a prayer for my master, Your Reverence; but here I was, out of work, and a soldier must be smart about his business.

So I stood up and saluted.

HIS Grace was in no hurry to speak; he was eyeing the head of Illeri and grinning. Now he looked down at my late lord (whom God receive!) and licked his lips; eftsoons he glanced round at his red troops, lining the piazza four-square already and still filing in—enough to eat my wretched little force—and licked his lips again. This was the first town he had added to his Duchy; it had cost him not a *soldo* or a soldier; it tasted sweet. Little did I think then to spend my best years bringing other such morsels to those clutching hands, that bitter, cruel mouth.

"Meseemed there might be trouble," says he, "and as President of the Council of Nobles—"

He'd no need to say more; he was Lord of Nola and Ferrante thenceforth —and I was to be his guard-captain, God help me! He clicked his tongue.

"Forty or more killed—and his poor lordship," says he. "All for wearing a false nose and listening to a sermon!"

"And for being young, Your Grace," says I. "And believing."

He turned those terrible red eyes upon me; I expected the worst and then suddenly he flung back his head and—for the first and last time in my knowledge of him—bared his fang-teeth and laughed aloud.

Aye, he sat there on his horse laughing.

Down by the gate, a house was burning with a crackling sound, to which His Grace's merriment

Later.

Reverend Sir, I broke off because as I wrote "merriment" there appeared in my garden two of Your Lordship's officers and the friar whom (sure enough) I am accused of insulting, assaulting and the Saints alone know what else.

The officers proved impatient and are now some little indisposed; but let not Your Eminence grieve for such fellows —if they grow not on hedges, at least they are born under 'em. The good Fra Matteo, who had come to see they did their duty, was persuadable to drink a flagon and to hear me read this letter.

We are now the best of friends, as (if he were awake) he would certify Your Reverence. He hath indeed come to see the perils of overriding thoroughbreds and hath agreed to preach before the young Duke next Sabbath from the comfortable text that laborers are worthy of their hire.

And of more pension than they usually get.

Especially laborers in those fields whose stalks are men, alas! and where the reaping hath been done with the sword,

Such as

Your Eminence's Devout Humble
Servant
L. Caradosso
Captain.

ENDORSEMENT

Recall that friar.
Send this old rogue xxx ducats.
Benvenuto (Seal) Costecaldi.

EAST of the WILLIWAW

A STORY OF THE LAND OF FIRE

By
LESLIE T. WHITE

They didn't stop at the far gate. They soared over the wall without even slowing up.

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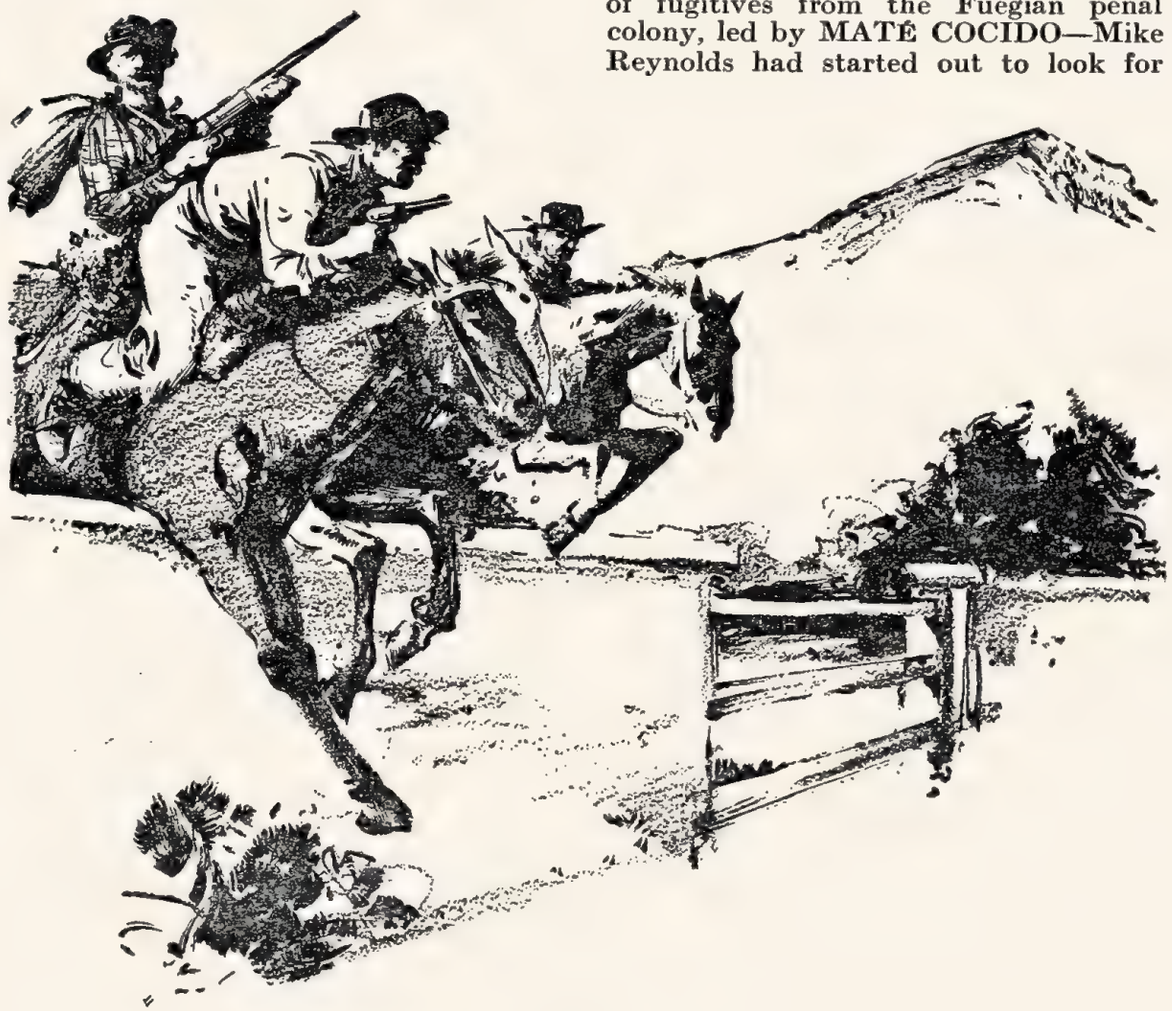
SO THIS was the bottom of the world!

I stared out across the Straits of Magellan and glimpsed, beyond, Tierra del Fuego, somewhere on whose uncharted coast lay *La Querancia,* the vast ranch which was my ultimate destination. Punta Arenas, at the southernmost tip of South America, was no place for me—JEFFREY WYNN—to be stranded and broke. But a cable from CAPTAIN NYMANN, Straits Pilot and business agent of my uncle, MIKE REYNOLDS, who owned the ranch, stated that Mike had disappeared, so I took the first plane from New York. When I arrived Nymann was absent on a pilotage. He had left only a brief note telling me that my uncle's body had been picked out of the sea by fishermen. I remembered Mike from years back when he had visited me and my widowed mother in New England, hero-worshipped the big rancher, and looked forward to the time when I could join him on La Querancia. Now he was dead and for four days I had been trying to find a way to reach the huge estancia which was my inheritance. But no one knew how to ferry me there through the two hundred miles of twisting channels and fiords.

That night in the Bar Corsair I learned that a German sportsman, KURT FABER, was planning to fly to Tierra del Fuego the next day on a hunting trip. Waiting for Faber, I encountered Nymann who told me that CAPTAIN LUNDSTROM, Uncle Mike's partner, had sailed for Punta Arenas with a load of beef and never arrived. Fearing that Lundstrom had been pirated by the "gulfers"—a band of fugitives from the Fuegian penal colony, led by MATÉ COCIDO—Mike Reynolds had started out to look for



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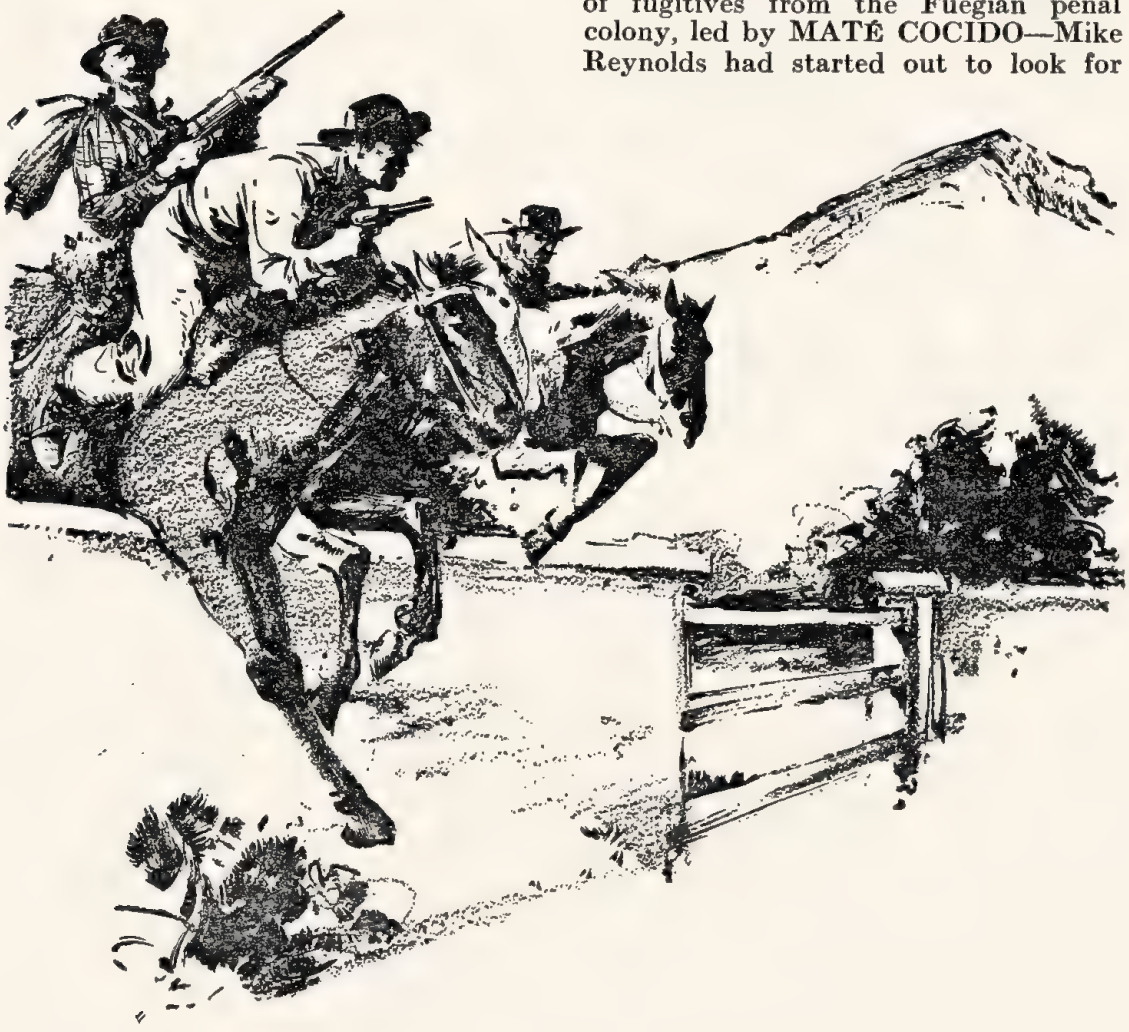


him in a small motor launch. This same gang might have murdered Mike.

After Nymann left the bar a group of German seamen from the tanker in port —she was supposedly lurking there to refuel the Nazi raider, the *Admiral Schneider*—came in. Taking me for an Englishman they started a brawl. The odds were hopelessly against me till a tall, gaunt man pitched in and helped me rout the Nazis. My rescuer turned out to be Kurt Faber and he agreed to take me along in his sports plane to Tierra del Fuego the next day.

Soon after we took off we ran into the dreaded williwaw, a sea-going tornado of fierce proportions common to the region. After the storm we had lost our bearings. Below, we spotted some horsemen. We swooped down but as we approached the earth the men opened fire on the plane with their carbines. Gas tank punctured, it was necessary to find a landing place immediately. Luck rode with us then for I saw a narrow fiord at one end of which lay a fertile valley. A cluster of small buildings, reminiscent of my own New England, grouped around a huge stone castle told me this was La Querancia.

When we landed and stepped from the pontoon to the wharf we were met by HENRY HIGGINS, major domo of the estancia. He told us Lundstrom was still missing and took us up to the house, where we met Mike's peppery old housekeeper, DAME SARAH MONTAGU, and Lundstrom's lovely blond daughter, SHIRLEY. I told them of Mike Reynolds' death.

Almost immediately the door banged open and Higgins burst into the room. "The bloody gulfers!" he gasped. "They're comin'!" Then he looked at me.

It was my fight now!

PART II

WE ALL jumped to our feet. Sarah Montagu produced a large brass key from under the folds of her dress and thrust it at Shirley.

"Don't stand there!" she shrilled. "Open the gun closet!" As the girl darted across the room, the old lady beat her cane on the floor and shrieked: "Tonita! Tonita, you fat fool! Bring me my revolver!"

Shirley unlocked a door that exposed a built-in rack of guns. I ran over. It was a good collection. There were a few Springfield army rifles, a couple of Rosses and the rest were sporting rifles, mostly Winchesters. There were a dozen revolvers. I chose a .44 Winchester carbine, snapped the lever to make sure it was loaded and turned to offer a gun to Faber. Then I saw for the first time that he had brought along his own rifle.

We followed Higgins out onto the porch. As I watched the horsemen gallop down the slope towards the main house, I knew it was the same band that had shot at us.

"They have to pass through two gates," Faber commented. "If we hold our fire until they reach the second gate, we can't miss."

Sarah Montagu rapped her cane. "Nonsense! If they were on a raid they wouldn't come galloping up to the house in broad daylight. They'd go after the stock. They'd much rather have a nice fat hog than a skinny thing like Shirley."

Faber's suggestion seemed like a good one. The gulfers were about a couple of hundred yards away. When they stopped to open the precise white gate that was so suggestive of Uncle Mike's New England background, we could, perhaps, pick off two or three of them. But the others would scatter, in all likelihood, and the whole thing would have to be done over again. However, if we let them come into the adjoining field and fought them at a distance of thirty yards, we could have a decisive victory.

"Higgins, take Mr. Faber and half your men and get behind that white shed. Hold your fire until I signal. We'll let them get bunched around the gate. Will you women please go inside the house? I'll take the rest of the men with me."

Sarah Montagu glared at me. "I will not budge from this porch, young man!" she barked at me, beating her cane to emphasize each word. "And don't you

dare try to tell me what I should do!"

While I was absorbing that volley, Shirley said: "I'll go with you, Jeff. Remember, you can't speak Spanish."

WE LEFT the irate old lady planted squarely in front of the house. We ducked across the clearing and ran for the shelter of another small out-house that formed, with the shed where Faber and Higgins were hidden, a perfect bottleneck through which the raiders would have to pass to reach the house.

I watched for the gulfers to stop and open the far gate. They didn't stop—they soared over it without even slowing up. Their horses were wiry and powerful, but small. All except the leader's. He rode a tremendous dapple gray stallion with a long white mane and a flowing tail. Three of the riders carried long spears, like Bengal lancers, and I noticed as they raced across the field towards us, that the one riding beside the leader had a white flag on his lance.

Faber had dropped to one knee and was watching them come on through the sights of his rifle. Higgins stood behind him, bracing his revolver against the corner of the shed. His men huddled in a group behind him. Higgins looked at me. I shook my head.

They were close now. The men behind me squirmed nervously. I could hear them snapping the bolts in their old army rifles. Then I saw something else.

The man on the dapple-gray was carrying another man, a limp figure that lay inertly across the front of his saddle, like a shot jaguar. As they reached the second gate which we had mentally marked as the dead-line, the gulfers slid their ponies to a quick stop. All but the leader, with the man on his saddle.

That white gate must have been well over four feet high, yet the big gray stallion cleared it with nearly a foot to spare. As he came over, tail flowing out behind, mane waving, the rider roared with laughter.

He must have known we were there in ambush. He could have seen us plainly when we ran out of the house, as we saw them. But he galloped past

HENRY HIGGINS

us so close I could have thrown the rifle at him. Halfway between the gate and the house, he set the stallion back on his haunches and dropped from the saddle. He stamped the dust off his clothes, then lifted the unconscious man into his arms as though he were a sleeping child.

It happened so incredibly fast no one of us moved. I watched the powerful renegade march slowly, almost tenderly, towards the house where old Sarah Montagu waited stiffly on the porch, like some proud queen standing before her throne to receive a foreign ambassador.

Then Shirley sobbed, "It's father!" and started running.

I stopped only long enough to yell at Higgins: "Keep the rest of those damn thieves on the other side of the fence! Kill the first one that comes over." And I hurried after Shirley.

We reached the porch ahead of the gulfer.

He came slowly, easily, with a suggestion of swagger in his stride. He was a tall, powerful man, dressed all in black, except for the brown calf skin vest.

He had a heavy Webley military revolver strapped to the leg of his black *bombachas*. Around his waist, like a sash, he wore a *boleadero*—a strange weapon made of leather thongs tipped by heavy metal balls and used for bringing down cattle.

He had a sort of Teddy Roosevelt smile and his teeth gleamed whitely in his swarthy face. Bisecting his forehead was a pale scar, and I knew I was face to face with the notorious Maté Cocido himself.

"*Hola!*" boomed Maté Cocido. "*Señora! Permítame que le presente un conocido.*"

"*Basta, villano!*" snapped Sarah Montagu, shaking her cane at him. "Speak in English, you *ladron*—you thief!"

Maté Cocido tipped back his head and howled with laughter. The unconscious man lay limp across the arms of the gulfer.

"Ho, sure! I come bring the hot-tongued señora a geeft for which I 'ave no use. Yes?" He held out the inert figure of the man.

Shirley ran over and looked at his burden. Then she stepped back and shoved her hand against her mouth in consternation.

"It's not father!" she whimpered. Before I could stop her, she stepped behind Maté Cocido and placed the muzzle of her revolver firmly against the nape of his neck.

"Tell me what you've done with Captain Lundstrom!" Shirley cried. "Before I blow your brains out!"

I saw her finger whiten on the trigger, and I knew she meant it. I held my breath. But the crazy gulfer merely hunched his shoulders and howled with laughter.

"*Alto, alto!*" he squealed. "Dat teekle like hell!"

Sarah Montagu said: "Stop it, Shirley. He'll drop that poor devil. Bring him in, Maté Cocido." She turned and led the way into the house.

Maté Cocido paused on the top step to shout something in Spanish to his men. They yelled back and waved their guns. I saw Higgins flinch. Then we went into the house. Faber came along behind me.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEGEND OF THE ALBATROSS

WE WENT into the big room and Maté Cocido laid his burden gently on an old black leather couch near the fireplace. Shirley lighted an oil lamp that was bracketed in the wall above the couch and the soft light illuminated the wan figure lying so still and quiet.

Sarah Montagu sat on the couch beside the man and touched his pulse. He was a youngish man, about thirty I should judge, with curly brown hair and a white, thin skin. His face was bruised. He was dressed in torn, dirty whites.

"Who is he?" I asked the gulfer.

Maté Cocido shrugged. "He weel come to very soon, I theenk. The ride she knock the weend from heem. He tell a story I theenk you want to hear, perhaps."

Shirley looked at him. "Is it about my father?" she asked quickly.

Maté Cocido nodded. He wasn't smiling now. "*Si*, señorita. About your father and Miko Reynoldo and maybe all of us, yes."

Faber edged closer. "But who *is* this man?" he insisted.

Maté Cocido turned and looked Faber over slowly from head to foot. Then he smiled rather contemptuously.

"'Ave patience, señor," he suggested sardonically. "The lieutenant he will tell you soon his story, I theenk."

"Lieutenant? What—" Faber colored, but before either of us could say anything, the old lady screamed for a drink. The table was still in front of the fireplace, so I poured a little brandy into a teacup and handed it to her. Maté Cocido helped her lift the sick man's head while she forced the liquid between his lips.

The man on the couch sputtered, tried to turn his head away, then opened his eyes. He looked at us, staring down at him, and finally his gaze settled on the dark face of Maté Cocido.

"I 'ave brought you to La Querancia," the gulfer told the sick man. "These people they are your friends." He indicated Shirley with a nod of his

head. "Thees ees Captain Lundstrom's daughter, yes."

Dame Montagu leaned forward. "That's true, young man," she said kindly. "Who are you?"

We all crowded forward to listen.

The man on the couch looked around slowly, reading each face for what he could find. He did not speak at once.

Maté Cocido remarked: "We pull heem out of the sea, like feesh."

I pushed over and sat on a chair near the couch. "Look, fella, I'm Jeffrey Wynn, Mike Reynolds' nephew," I said. I thought it would be easier for him if he had only one person to talk at. "What's your name, and who are you?"

He gave me a grateful smile. "My name's Cromwell, sir. John Cromwell, junior lieutenant in His Majesty's Royal Navy." He had a decided British accent, and he pronounced lieutenant *leftenant.*

"How did you get here, Lieutenant?" I pressed him.

The smile left his face. It became chill, bleak. His eyes looked us all over very carefully, then he turned back to me.

"I escaped from the German pocket battleship *Admiral Schneider!*" he said. "She's hiding in one of these fiords!"

"Go on!" I urged him. I was afraid to look at Shirley. This was going to be bad news.

Cromwell gave us the story brokenly. Twice he had to lie quiet and I was afraid he had passed out again. Dame Montagu forced brandy between his lips and tried to keep our questions in chronological order. I sat there listening, as though to a story being read to me. The sun had dipped over the hills. Outside the long windows, the lagoon looked like a large tear-shaped sapphire. Shadows stole into the big room and crept up the gray-brown timbers. My heart pounded as Cromwell talked.

It was, in a way, history repeating itself. I had read many times of how the German cruiser *Dresden,* after escaping from the British squadron in that fateful spring of 1915, had fled into the wild, uncharted passages of Tierra del Fuego, and lay the entire summer, licking her wounds and preying on shipping, neutral or otherwise, that chanced to come within range.

And now, a quarter of a century later, another German marauder had sneaked into the same lair—the *Admiral Schneider.* Before I had left New York the newspapers had hinted that she did, in fact, exist, but most people thought the *Admiral Schneider* was a myth. There had been reports of her prowling after convoys and dropping, like a coyote, on lone transports. There was the heroic story of the *Jervis Bay,* which had literally committed suicide in the face of the raider's guns to save her convoy.

Now this sick, feverish man lying on the couch in a room built from the timbers of windships was telling us that he had just escaped from the *Admiral Schneider,* and that she was, literally, a neighbor of ours!

"You mentioned Captain Lundstrom?" I prompted Cromwell.

The Englishman nodded. "He's alive and well. The *Admiral Schneider* was desperate for food. They caught his vessel passing through the narrows, took the men prisoners, confiscated the beef and supplies and scuttled her."

"You're sure my father is all right?" Shirley insisted.

Cromwell smiled. "Yes, he is fine. He told me about his ranch here. That's why I tried to make it. He assured me that one of you would get me over to the British Consul in Punta Arenas so we could communicate with our squadron stationed at the Falklands. We'll give those Jerries a lesson, I'll promise you."

"Of course we'll get you over to Punta Arenas," I told him. "And Mike Reynolds . . . ?"

Cromwell bit his lip. "I'm sorry, Wynn. Beastly sorry, but I'm afraid Mike is—gone."

"I know that. His body was found. I want to know how he died."

CROMWELL'S eyes took on that flinty look. "Mike Reynolds died like a gentleman and a sea captain!" he said. "He came poking into the fiord where the *Admiral Schneider* was hiding. The Germans were as surprised as Reynolds,

I fancy. They signaled for him to surrender, and I'll be damned if that crazy Yankee didn't answer by dropping a three pound shell directly on the upper bridge of the cruiser. We prisoners were all on deck when it happened. The Germans tried to drive us below, so we wouldn't see what happened—they did that every time we knocked over a ship—but we refused to leave. I was standing near Captain Lundstrom. He knew it was Mike Reynolds, for we were close enough to see him. He kept shouting, *'Give dem damn Germans hell! Give 'em hell, Mike!'* He kept yelling like that even after the cruiser had blown Reynolds' boat out of the water." Cromwell looked me in the face. "You should be mighty proud of your uncle, Wynn!"

"I am proud of him!" I said. "You spoke of prisoners on the *Admiral Schneider*. How many are there?"

"About two hundred and eighty. Half of them are English. There are about thirty Dutchmen and a handful of Frenchmen who still believe in France. The rest are neutrals. There are about fourteen Americans among the prisoners. The *Admiral Schneider* carries a crew of over a thousand men."

"How long will the *Schneider* be around here?" I asked.

Cromwell shrugged. "That's hard to tell. However, through the grapevine we learned that she is due to refuel. There's supposed to be a couple of German tankers lying in Punta Arenas, waiting to make contact."

"Faber and I can verify that," I told him. "We had a brawl with some of the Nazi seamen."

"That's right," Faber added. "I believe there were two tankers."

Cromwell turned restlessly on the couch. "I must get to Punta Arenas, immediately," he muttered weakly. "If the German refuels, she will be out raiding shipping and it may take months to locate her again. I've got to notify the British squadron. Do you understand?"

"There ees somet'ing else," put in Maté Cocido softly. He had been forgotten, but at the sound of his voice, everyone turned and stared at him, seated casually on the edge of the table, slapping his riding boots with his quirt.

"There ees thees other t'ing," he repeated, sure of our attention. "The Germans will come look for thees man. Already they row the boats up an' down the shore, while we hide heem in a cave. But w'en they find thees nice estancia, weet all the nice cattle an' the preety, preety señorita"—he grinned roguishly at Shirley—"eet weel not be so good. *No!*"

Sarah Montagu made a clucking sound with her teeth. "Maté Cocido is right!" she snapped. "If they scuttled Lundstrom's little freighter for a few cows, they can't know of the existence of La Querancia." She looked at Cromwell. "They know, of course, of your escape?"

The lieutenant nodded. "Unfortunately, they do. Maté what-ever-his-name-is speaks the truth. You must realize how serious this is. It is terribly important to the Nazi strategy that the pocket battleships continue to harass world shipping. Our Admiralty suspects the existence of the *Admiral Schneider* but has no definite information. That's why I must reach our consul! And by the same token, the Nazis will stop at nothing—nothing, I warn you frankly—to keep the word from leaking out. There is too much at stake to worry about a few lives on an obscure ranch in Tierra del Fuego."

"You are using a lot of words, young man," said the old lady testily, "to tell us our lives are in danger! Is that what you're trying to say?"

Maté Cocido laughed. "The **old** one, she smart like the fox!"

"Silencio! Sin verguenza!" Dame Montagu cried. But her eyes were lively.

"You will get me to the consul, won't you?" Cromwell asked, looking at me.

"Of course!" I promised. "At the earliest possible moment."

Faber touched my arm. "Jeffrey, may I intrude into this? If you find some way of getting my gas tank repaired, I shall be happy to fly the lieutenant over to Punta Arenas first thing in the morning. I agree that speed is essential if you don't want to be wiped out by the raider's crew."

I slapped him on the shoulder. "Thanks, Faber."

"How long ago did you escape?" Sarah Montagu asked Cromwell.

The Englishman looked a little bewildered. "What day is this?"

"Saturday."

He closed his eyes. "Is it possible?" he moaned. "I got away on Wednesday."

"Three days wasted!" said the old lady, banging her cane. "Why are you all sitting around here? Jeffrey, do something!"

I SENT for Higgins and learned that La Querancia had a well equipped workshop. Higgins dispatched the blacksmith with Faber to remove the gasoline tank for repairs. That started, I carried Cromwell up to a bedroom. I was amazed at the frailty of the man; he was mere skin and bones. When I undressed him, I saw that his body was covered with bruises, sustained, I imagine, when he tried to swim along the grim rocks of the fiords. I made a mental note to ask Maté Cocido for details of the rescue, but when I got downstairs again, the gulfer was gone.

No one had seen him leave. Somehow he had chosen a moment when we were all occupied to steal away. He had also stolen all the liquor set out on the table. Sarah Montagu chuckled when she heard about it.

"Maté Cocido's a sly scalawag!" she laughed. "I like a man with spirit."

None of the rest of us agreed with her. Faber expressed the thought that was growing in my mind.

"I had an instant revulsion against that man," Faber said. "He's proved himself a common thief, and for all we know, he may even now be selling the Germans the information that Cromwell is hiding here on the estancia."

It wasn't a pleasant thought.

Dinner was a dreary affair. Cromwell had lapsed into a coma, and Tonita was sitting at his bedside while we ate the evening meal. Shirley sat with compressed lips, throwing up a protective silence about herself. Sarah Montagu tried to act unconcerned about the whole affair; she believed, as she put it, in keeping troubles away from the table. Faber, alone remained normal and self-assured.

He kept up a running fire of conversation. He was especially interested in La Querancia and plied the old lady with questions. How many men did we have on the estancia? How much stock and cattle? Did we have a radio? Wasn't there any means of communication with the mainland?

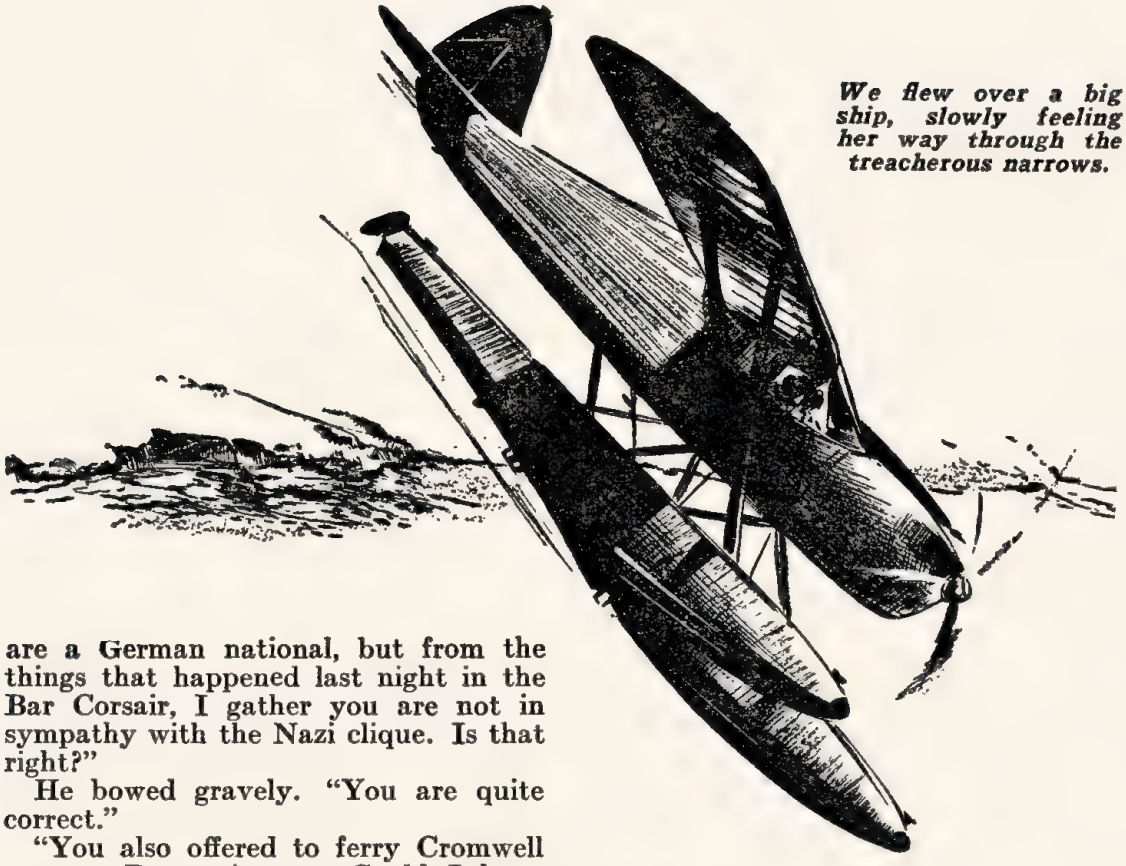
I was a little surprised myself to learn how utterly isolated La Querancia really was. Perhaps it was the excitement of the afternoon that accentuated it. Mike Reynolds and Lundstrom had wanted no contact with the outside world; they read no newspapers, would tolerate no radio. They had built this feudal empire and shut themselves away from reality with a monastic severity. It looked as though we were going to pay the price for that attempted escape.

After dinner we sent for Higgins and gathered around the fireplace in the big room to hold a council of war. Sarah Montagu insisted we finish our coffee before one word of the problem was discussed. But as I leaned against the mantel and from the shadows watched the firelight dance across the faces of the others, the full impact of the situation hit me. I was in charge.

I was grateful for the presence of Faber. I had to keep him with us somehow. Although it was not his fight, perhaps I could influence him. He loved adventure—well, he'd get it on La Querancia.

Aside from Faber, I had very little support. Cromwell, of course, would stay over at Punta Arenas; he was too ill to be of much use. Henry Higgins looked to me like a doddering old friar. Shirley was a girl. Strangely enough, I was glad for old Sarah Montagu. I looked at her now, sitting stiff-backed on the edge of her chair, balancing a demitasse cup in her withered hands. Her full black skirt was spread out fan-shaped in front of her. Her white wig was slightly askew, giving her a jaunty, almost inebriated look. She glanced up suddenly and caught my eye. She winked slyly, and I felt my face grow red.

"Faber," I said bluntly, "I know this isn't your fight. I know, too, that you



We flew over a big ship, slowly feeling her way through the treacherous narrows.

are a German national, but from the things that happened last night in the Bar Corsair, I gather you are not in sympathy with the Nazi clique. Is that right?"

He bowed gravely. "You are quite correct."

"You also offered to ferry Cromwell over to Punta Arenas. Could I hope that you might come back and help us out until the British cruisers blow that damn *Admiral Schneider* out of the water?"

"No!"

We all jumped. I had asked Faber a direct question, and Shirley Lundstrom had screamed an answer. I glared at her.

"What do you mean, Shirley?"

She was crying. "You mustn't send for the English!" she cried. "You are an American. This isn't your quarrel. Why don't you stay at home and mind your own business!"

I was too taken aback to speak for a minute. Dame Montagu gave a disdainful snort.

"If you are becoming hysterical, young woman, I suggest you retire to your room."

"Stop it!" screamed the girl. "Stop talking to me as though I were a child! I won't let you send for the English. Do you understand! I'll warn the German ship if you do!"

"Shirley!"

"I will! I will!"

"Say, what's the matter with you?" I demanded. I hate dames who go wacky at the drop of the hat. "If Captain Lundstrom had enough nerve to pile his freighter on the rocks to keep one German from grabbing it, and my uncle Mike had the guts to try and shoot it out with a battleship, I guess we can try to even up the score a little."

"No!" she cried. "I won't have it!" She jumped to her feet and ran out of the room.

SARAH MONTAGU stared at the door through which the girl had vanished. Her wig had slipped a little farther forward on her brow.

"Well, I'll be damned!" she said.

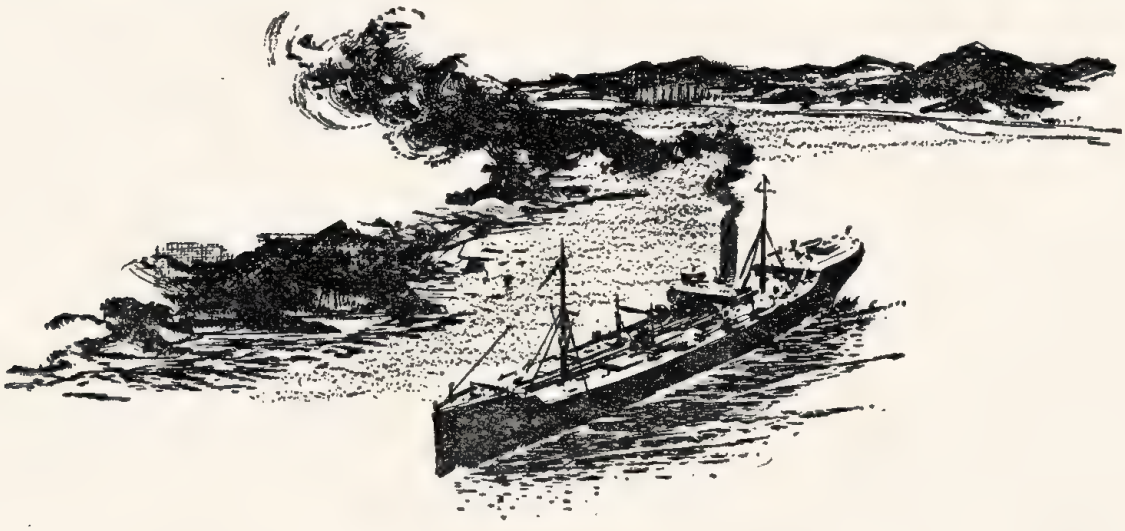
It broke the tension. It was so unexpected that even Higgins closed his gaping mouth and half-smiled. Faber grinned.

"She's worried about her father," he

said gently. "Poor kid. That's the fortune of war. She feels she'd rather have the *Admiral Schneider* afloat and her father a prisoner, than have them both at the bottom of the sea."

She smiled, and looked into the fire. "You are a lot like Mike. Yes, a lot like him, Jeffrey."

After a while I spoke of the thing that was worrying me. "You don't really



"I'm ashamed of her!" snapped the old lady. "That doesn't sound like Nels Lundstrom's daughter."

"Do you think she means it?" I asked.

Sarah Montagu looked at me. "I'll be responsible for Shirley."

Faber put his cup down. He rose to his feet. "Jeffrey, you asked if I would come back and help out. You have but to command me, sir. I suggest that you have this young Englishman ready to leave at daybreak. I will see that he contacts his consul, and return here to be of whatever service I can." He clicked his heels and bowed formally. Then he smiled. "Now, if you will pardon me, I shall make sure that my ship is ready to fly." He turned and left the room.

Higgins chose the moment to escape. "H'I'll trot along with you, sir," he suggested to Faber. "H'it's bloody black h'outside."

I sprawled in a chair and stared at the flames. Dame Montagu folded her hand. I could see her studying me intently.

Finally, she said: "Jeffrey, I should like you to call me Aunt Sarah."

"I'd like to," I told her warmly. "You can't know how comforting it is to find you here—Aunt Sarah."

think Shirley would warn the German cruiser, do you?"

"She won't as long as I'm alive," the old lady said quietly.

We didn't say anything for quite a while. The reaction of all the excitement was stealing over me. It permeated my whole body, like a narcotic. I felt both tired and numb in body and dreamy in the mind. I remembered fragments of all that had happened. I recalled Sarah Montagu asking me if I believed in the legend of the albatross.

I reminded her of it. "What is the legend?" I asked.

She was silent for so long I thought perhaps she had not heard me. The fire had died until only the embers glowed, sending out nervous flashes of light. Outside the great, wide windows the stars shone brilliantly in the cold antarctic sky.

"It's a beautiful old story, Jeffrey," she murmured softly. "In days gone by many seamen were swept overboard in the thunderous seas off this coast. Unnumbered ships vanished before iceberg and storm. It could hardly be called a resting place. And so the haunting story passed around that the soul of every lost seaman found a haven in the graceful body of an albatross, there to soar

through all the tempests of eternity."

"And Uncle Mike believed the legend?" I asked her.

She nodded, then rustled her skirts and rose. "I believe it too, Jeffrey. This morning before you arrived I watched from this window an albatross that was circling the fiord. It was a lovely bird, so strong, so brave, so close. I want to believe that it was Mike, watching over us."

Before I could say anything, she leaned forward and kissed me.

"Good-night, Jeffrey!"

I heard her cane tap slowly up the stairs.

CHAPTER VII

RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT

TONITA awakened me before daylight. I dressed swiftly and hurried to Cromwell's room where I found that Sarah Montagu had sat up with him all night. She was still there. It took just one quick look to know that Lieutenant Cromwell would not leave La Querancia this morning. He lay against the pillow as one dead. His eyes were closed and his skin was the color of stale dough. I glanced at the old lady. She shook her head.

"He was delirious most of the night," she told me.

Faber came in while we were talking. He seemed as disappointed as I was.

"Perhaps it might be well to bundle him into the plane anyhow," he suggested. "I can get him to the hospital in Punta Arenas."

Aunt Sarah snorted. "The ride would kill him. He doesn't need a hospital; he needs a little rest. If you landed over at Punta Arenas with him, before he was in town five minutes some German agent would learn his identity and notify the *Admiral Schneider*." She shook her head emphatically. "No, he stays right here until he's fit to travel."

"As you think best, madame," bowed Faber. "Then I shall carry the news myself."

"I can't let you take that risk alone," I said.

Faber tried to argue the point, but I wouldn't hear of it. Aunt Sarah urged me to go with him. I couldn't see that either. Not until I knew where the pocket battleship was hiding. Faber wanted to make a reconnaissance flight alone. However, I insisted on accompanying him. He gave in a little sullenly, I thought.

He seemed to feel that I did not trust him. I did, but I wanted to get the lay of the land with my own eyes, and the air offered the best opportunity. I paused only long enough to talk with Higgins about the placing of guards around the estancia, then Faber and I went down to the plane.

I hadn't seen Shirley since her blow-off the night before. Higgins and a couple of his men came down to the float to help us get away. As I climbed into the plane, Higgins leaned over.

"You'll be comin' back, Mr. Jeffrey?"

"Certainly," I told him. "If the *Admiral Schneider* isn't around, we may fly over to Punta Arenas. In any case, I'll be back as soon as possible. Meanwhile, keep a sharp lookout. I'm depending on you, Higgins."

He touched his forehead. "H'I'll do my best, sir. W'at if that ruddy brigand shows up again?"

Faber was strapping on his safety belt. He overheard Higgins' question.

"I'd shoot him on sight, if it were left to me," Faber said.

I thought of Shirley and the old lady alone in the big house, and for a moment I wavered in my determination to accompany Faber. It suddenly seemed a silly thing for both of us to leave at once. But I couldn't stand the thought of idly waiting while Faber took all the risk.

"Stand him off until I get back," I told Higgins.

As soon as we were in the air, I was glad I had come along. The estancia lay before me like a large relief map. Both the valley and the fiord were completely enclosed by a rim of mountains, like the walls of some medieval castle. Beyond the range the land leveled to a barren plateau dotted with stunted vegetation. It might be good enough to graze sheep. As we climbed higher, I could see that in all directions there was no other green

land save in the valley of La Querancia. Little wonder, then, that the Germans had not yet discovered us.

Instead of flying a straight course, Faber flattened out at three thousand feet and followed the twisting course of the channel. He made no notes but from the intent way he watched each swing of the compass I could tell that he was memorizing the course. Our general direction was west. I impressed upon my own mind a picture of the channel in case anything prevented Faber from bringing me back by plane. I was so determined to get back before any trouble started, I meant, if it proved necessary, to hire a boat and attempt to pilot it myself.

It's strange how we do things, rationalizing them in our own mind. Perhaps it is an unconscious premonition, if there is such a thing; perhaps some unknown sense urges us to certain action, leaving our minds to explain it as best we can. In any event, I studied that course as carefully as though I were to be the one to fly us back.

Faber had little to say. His brief attack of sullenness had passed and he was as buoyant and pleasant as ever. But in the clear, cold light of the morning, he looked older, and perhaps a little tired.

It was peculiar, too, that I should mention the radio when I did. I was watching the compass swing as we banked towards the northwest, and when he straightened, I noticed the radio again.

"I wonder if we couldn't pick up a British cruiser with that set?" I asked.

Faber shook his head. "It has a very limited range," he assured me. "Besides that, the *Admiral Schneider* would pick up the message and either escape or set a trap. It is not practical, Jeffrey."

I let it go at that. In fact I felt a little foolish for making such an obvious suggestion to a man with so much more experience in this sort of thing.

卐 WE WERE about forty miles from the estancia when we turned into the main channel that opened into Bluff Bay—and discovered a big ship slowly feeling her way through the treacherous narrows.

"Look!" I called instinctively. Faber had seen it too.

At first I thought that we had met the *Admiral Schneider.* A second glance showed that this was no warship but a heavily loaded tanker. Then I recognized her, even without the swastika, as one of the German tankers I had seen hiding in Punta Arenas. Doubtlessly she had chosen last night's squall to slip her mooring and sneak past the watchful British *Rajah* to make good her escape in the dangerous waterways of Tierra del Fuego.

I realized that she was on her way to a secret rendezvous with the *Admiral Schneider!*

"Let's get out of here!" I suggested. "Maybe they haven't spotted us!" It was a vain hope for we were racing straight for her at better than a hundred miles an hour.

"They have seen us already," Faber said. "We must be careful and not act suspiciously."

"We've got to turn back!" I insisted. "This tanker can only be coming in here for one purpose—to meet and refuel the *Admiral Schneider.* We must get back to La Querancia."

"You are jumping to a conclusion, Jeffrey."

I was so busy watching the tanker that I was only half conscious of what Faber was doing. I saw him reach over and flip on the radio; I saw the dial glow; I saw him brush off his beret and slip the head-set over his skull. But none of these things registered until he began to speak rapidly into the mouthpiece.

"*Verstaendigen Sie ihren Kapitaen sofort. Hier ist Kapitaen Heinrich von Faber von der Marine Geheimpolizei. Der englische . . . .*"

I don't understand German, but I caught that *Captain Heinrich von Faber.* I jerked around in my seat. I saw his eyes. The bleakness on his sharp, leathery face. Then I made a grab for the instrument.

He let go the control stick and straight-armed me with his right. The heel of his hand struck my mouth. My

head banged against the door. He twisted his mouth away from the microphone.

"*Verflucht!*" he barked at me. "Keep away, you fool!"

Then I saw the naked muzzle of the Luger in his left hand.

He put his lips back to the mike. "*Der englische Schweinehund der vom Admiral Schneider entwich, verbirgt sich auf einer Farm vierzig Kilometer . . . .*"

The pistol stayed pointed at my middle.

The whole ugly truth exploded in my brain at once. All the tiny indications which in themselves had meant nothing now became a composite picture that knocked out all caution. Faber was a German agent! No wonder he had wanted to take the wounded Englishman away with him! No wonder he had not wanted me along on this flight!

I kicked the rudder-bar as hard as I could. The ship slewed sideways. I threw one leg over the dual stick and hooked it solid with my knee. The ship started to slide into a spin . . . .

Faber fired . . . . fired twice . . . . but he was thrown off balance. Both slugs whined in front of me. I braced against the belt. I hit him as hard as I could with my right. As his head jolted back, I snatched at his gun with my left. He pulled the trigger. The gun went off in my hand. The fleshy part of my thumb jammed in the recoil mechanism.

I tore the mike from his head and heaved it behind me in the fuselage. The ship was swirling giddily in a spin. One second he was above me, the next beneath me. I kept beating at his face until he let go the Luger, then I jerked back to my own corner of the seat. I pulled my knee off the control stick and freed my torn hand from the gun.

It was a good ship. The moment I took my leg off the stick, she wanted to right herself. Faber, dazed and bleeding, pulled her out of the spin with a rush that brought my stomach up into my throat. By that time I had pumped another shell into the chamber of the Luger. I took my cue from him; I held the gun well over in my right hand where he could not reach it.

"Turn around," I ordered him.

He gave me a black glare, then suddenly he smiled. It was like one of those Cape Horn squalls—those williwaws; one moment his face was dark and foreboding, the next the sun was shining.

"I thought you had lost your mind, Jeffrey."

"Turn around!" I said grimly.

He banked her smartly. We were right above the tanker now.

A harsh guttural voice blared out of the loud-speaker. Faber reached over and cut the switch.

"What in heaven's name is wrong with you?" he asked. "Now the master of that tanker will suspect there is something the matter, or that we know what he is doing here."

For just a fraction of a second I wavered. He made it convincing. After all, I had not understood what he said. It was natural he would speak German when talking to a German ship. Then I remembered the gun.

He thought of it too. "I feared you had gone crazy, Jeffrey," he said placatingly. "I pulled the gun to quiet you."

"Yeah? Well, I'm keeping it ready to quiet you, *Captain* Faber!" I told him.

"Now take it easy, Jeffrey!"

I noticed he was easing the plane lower all the time he was talking. I gave the stick a yank with my leg.

"Get 'er up!" I warned him.

He brought her up in a slow climb. He must have known I was mad enough to blow him to hell. He probably thought he could work on me if he stalled long enough.

"I was merely trying to get the captain to identify his vessel," he explained quietly. "If you know anything about the sea, Jeffrey, you know that all ships speak to each other when passing. He would certainly have thought it strange if I had not done so. Lord knows what he thought when he heard you shouting at me!"

I shook my head. "It's no dice, Faber. I'm wise to you."

He shrugged his shoulders. "It is a shame our friendship had to end like this."

I was satisfied I was right. "It takes me a long time to wake up," I said, "but

once my eyes are open, I don't fall asleep again."

"Now, Jeffrey," he began, but I cut him off.

"Shut up! You set me down in La Querancia within half an hour, or I'll put *you* down in hell. And I mean it, Faber! So help me God!"

CHAPTER VIII

FABER SPREADS HIS HAND

HIGGINS and two of his men were waiting on the float as we taxied up to a landing. As they grabbed a wing-tip to pull us around, Faber cut the switch and looked at me. He was smiling, but it was a bleak smile, devoid of mirth.

"Don't you think this joke . . . ."

I unsnapped my safety belt. "Get out!" I ordered.

Faber shook his head. "I've had quite enough of your hospitality," he said harshly. He wasn't smiling now. "I am leaving."

"The hell you are! You damned spy! Now get out before I blow you out!"

He opened his mouth to argue, then his eyes met mine and he changed his mind. I would cheerfully have killed him. I guess it showed in my face. His mouth snapped shut, he freed the catch on his belt and pushed open his door. I waited until he was on the float before I followed.

Old Higgins had started a cheery greeting, but when he saw me pile out with a Luger pointed at Faber, his mouth sagged. His eyes bugged. My left hand was not badly hurt, but it was covered with blood. Faber's face was a mess. His nose was bent out of shape, there was blood around his chin and one eye was darkening.

"Have your men secure the plane," I told Higgins. "Take the rotor-arm out of the distributor so I can be damn sure this ship won't leave. Then come up to the house at once."

"Aye, aye, sir!" gulped Higgins.

I prodded Faber in the spine. We started up the slope.

Shirley must have seen us from the house for when we stepped onto the porch, she opened the big front doors and stood silent as we filed inside.

"Where's Sarah Montagu?" I asked her.

She tilted her head towards the great, winding staircase leading above. "With the Englishman!" Her voice was strained.

"How is he?"

She bit her lower lip. "Much better. He's sitting up in bed." She looked at the gun and then at my bloody hand. Her eyes were full of question.

I let her wonder. "Up!" I growled at Faber, nodding at the stairs.

Shirley followed, and before we were halfway up, Higgins burst in the front door and clumped after us. In this wise we walked into the huge, old-fashioned bedroom.

Lieutenant Cromwell was sitting up in bed with a cup of gruel in his hands. I don't know what alchemy Dame Montagu had worked, but the young English officer looked almost normal. There was a decided spot of color in each cheek and his eyes were clear. The old lady stood primly on the far side of the bed, her hands folded across her tiny waist, her white wig straight. Her chin was held at a regal angle. The silence was so great that when Cromwell put the cup down on the saucer, it sounded like a crash.

"You must have been born in a patch of four-leaf clovers," I told Cromwell. "The angels had their arms about you when you were too sick to travel with this rat."

"Come to the point, Jeffrey," snapped Aunt Sarah, keeping her bright little eyes on Faber.

"Sure. Folks, meet Public Rat number one—a Nazi spy! Herr Faber, probably of the *Gestapo!*"

Cromwell banged his cup and saucer down on the bedside table and put one leg over the side of the bed. I heard Shirley gasp behind me.

Faber brought his heels smartly together, bowed to the old lady and straightened in a smart salute to the Englishman in bed.

"Captain Heinrich von Faber of the German Naval Intelligence," he said stiffly.

Lieutenant Cromwell's eyes grew cold, but he brought up his right hand in a salute.

MY NERVES were ready to snap. This might all be a nice war game to this young Englishman and the German agent, to be played with etiquette and rules, but it was plain murder to me. Mike Reynolds was dead. Nels Lundstrom along with over a hundred other neutrals was held a prisoner on the German raider. Our own lives were in danger. It was no game to me.

"Listen, all of you!" I shouted. "We met a Nazi tanker down the channel. That means only one thing—the *Admiral Schneider* will be back for a refueling rendezvous. Get that?"

Cromwell braced himself against the edge of the bed. "Then you did not get word to my consul . . . .?"

"The only word we put out was to the Nazis!" I told them. "This spy contacted the tanker by radio and took a couple of shots at me with this Luger to boot."

"Did he tell them I was here?" Cromwell asked.

"I don't know what he told them! I don't understand German. At least they know something is up, from the squawking they did."

Faber bowed. There was a supercilious smirk playing around the corner of his mouth.

"Permit me," he intruded. "There is no sense in evading the truth."

"That's good—coming from you!" I sneered.

He smiled, and spoke to Cromwell. "Let me remind you of the situation, Lieutenant. I have notified my compatriots of the route and position of La Querancia. They will come very soon now. There is no place to go, so you cannot escape. Resistance would be futile as well as fatal. I'm certain you can see that, Lieutenant. You have but one alternative."

Cromwell said coldly: "Surrender?"

Faber bowed. "Complete surrender," he repeated. "You, I regret to say, Lieutenant, must face the consequences of your escape."

Cromwell made a gesture of impatience. "That is unimportant. These others are neutrals. If your sailors land here, it amounts to an invasion of Chilean territory! An act of war, I might remind you, *Herr Kapitaen!*"

"Thank you," said Faber with an irritating smile. "But the German people do not hesitate to protect their own interests."

"I'll say they don't," I put in.

Faber ignored me. "All of you will be prisoners for the duration of the war aboard the *Admiral Schneider*. You will be treated with courtesy. Owing to my rank, I am empowered to accept your surrender at this time." He clicked his heels and saluted again.

"Captain Faber, I might suggest you address your ultimatum to Mr. Wynn," Cromwell said, and nodded to me. "Unless I'm gravely mistaken, he is in charge here. He might have some notions on the subject."

Faber bowed again.

"Well, it's damned good of one of you to remember that," I said. "In the first place, Faber, I don't know what keeps me from blowing your heart out, you rotten spy! We'll make our decision with no advice from you."

Shirley said: "Jeffrey, don't you think the rest of us might be consulted before you get hot-headed?"

"Sure," I said to her. "Maybe you'd like to surrender?"

"I'm thinking of my father!" she flared.

"Now, now!" Dame Montagu warned us. "No bickering! Since this concerns us all, as Shirley has said, we should all be permitted to express an opinion individually."

I realized that I had been going too fast. I was putting their lives in jeopardy because of my own hatred for the murderers of Mike Reynolds. Over and over in my mind revolved the story young Cromwell had told of Mike's defiance of the Nazi warship. I was so proud of him it choked my throat and blurred my vision. Perhaps it had been a foolish, suicidal gesture, but by God—it was typically American! And now these women wanted me to take it sitting down.

"Well, what is your opinion, Aunt Sarah?" I asked slowly.

She stiffened her back, clasped her hands until the knuckles showed white, and stuck out her chin. She looked like a bantam rooster about to crow.

"Speaking for myself," she said clearly, "I do not feel there is any alternative. I would rather face the whole damn German navy than give in one, yes, *one* inch! And if there are any others here who differ with me, I think they are a yellow-livered lot of carrion who had better take to the hills this instant!" She gave a loud snort and jerked her shoulders. "There, now, Herr Nazi! That's what *I* think!" Her wig had slipped to a rakish angle.

I wanted to hug her. I only said: "Thanks."

Higgins shouted: "'Ear, 'ear! My sentiments h'exactly, ma'am!"

"Thank you, Higgins."

Cromwell laughed. "I need hardly tell you it suits me very well."

Faber touched his heels and saluted the old lady. "Madame, the Lord made a slight mistake with you," he said, smiling. "You should have been a soldier."

"When I look at you Nazis," snapped the old lady, "I see where the Lord made plenty of mistakes!"

"Aunt Sarah!" gasped Shirley.

"I mean just that!" Aunt Sarah insisted. "And now, Jeffrey, you had better take command and make the decisions. The rest of us will abide by them. I'll see to that." She frowned at the girl.

"O. K.!" I said. "I'll start with you, Faber. I don't know much about the rules of war. To me you're just a gangster finger-man, a rat stool-pigeon, and that's the way you're going to be treated." I turned to Higgins. "Can you handle a gun?"

"H'I saw service in 'Is Majesty's Royal Navy, sir. H'if I might s'y so, sir, h'I'm a crack shot."

"I can vouch for Higgins," Aunt Sarah said tersely.

"Good. Take this spy into some room where he can't get out, and stay with him until relieved. Don't have any discussion with him. At the slightest move, the *slightest,* I tell you, blow him to hell. I won't even ask questions. Do I make myself understood, Higgins?"

"H'exactly. Very good, sir." He drew his own heavy revolver and stepped behind Faber. "March!" he ordered.

Faber walked over and stood in front of me. "Are you sure this is the way you want it, American?"

"It's exactly the way I want it! Take him out, Higgins."

CROMWELL sat smiling as Higgins steered Faber out of the room, then he turned back to the rest of us, and his smile faded.

"I'm afraid I've got you all in a devil of a mess!" he said.

"Drivel!" sniffed the old lady. "You had nothing to do with it."

"But I have," the lieutenant insisted. "Captain Faber was probably advised by code radio to search for me."

The whole mysterious business became clear to me. Faber's anxiety to leave Punta Arenas without the officials learning of it; his "hunting" trip to Tierra del Fuego was a man-hunt. Chance had thrown us together—maybe it wasn't even chance. God knows I had let everybody in Punta Arenas know I was anxious to get over to La Querancia.

"Let's not worry about what *has* happened," I suggested. "We've got enough worries ahead of us. How many men have we on the ranch, Aunt Sarah?"

"About ten, besides Higgins. They are good men, and dependable. Pillo, the blacksmith, is as good as two men. He is very strong, and the best shot on the estancia. He is Tonita's husband."

"How many men are they likely to have on a tanker?" I asked Cromwell.

He stroked his chin. "Roughly—about twenty-five. If they planned a raid, they would have to leave a skeleton crew aboard. I should say about twenty of them might attack. It's only a guess."

"Odds then are about two to one in their favor. They'll probably be better armed."

Aunt Sarah said: "Jeffrey, you'll have to consider the mountain passes. We usually keep them guarded."

"We can't do that now," I said. "The Germans will come by water. We'll need our entire force to welcome them when they get here."

Shirley looked at me with tight lips. "What about Maté Cocido and his gang?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "We'll have to take that chance. I'd rather have that renegade steal a few cows than have the Nazis move in on La Querancia. Aunt Sarah, will you get ahold of this Pillo, impress upon him the necessity of keeping Faber subdued and then send him to relieve Higgins. I'll need Higgins with me. Meanwhile, I'm going to take a walk down to look over the waterfront."

Cromwell stopped me. "I'd like a word with you," he said.

When the others had gone, he looked me straight in the eye. "I admire your nerve, Wynn, but the thing is foolhardy. Suppose you do stand off the tanker crew. The German cruiser will be along very shortly with twelve hundred armed men aboard. You won't have a Chinaman's chance! Why, man, the *Admiral Schneider* can stand ten miles down the channel, train her guns over these hills and blast La Querancia off the map. You wouldn't even know she was there until too late!"

"What do you suggest?"

He shook his head. "I'm not suggesting. Personally, the only interest I have is seeing the *Admiral Schneider* sunk. Nothing else matters to me in the least, Wynn. Nothing."

"If the Nazi cruiser opened up her big guns the thunder would be heard or felt nearby over to Punta Arenas," I reasoned. "The English squadron would get over here in a hurry."

"That's quite possible," he admitted. "But it wouldn't save you."

"Perhaps it wouldn't, Cromwell. But I assume the Nazi command will have sense enough to figure out the same thing. They won't risk bringing the English squadron down around their ears. Nazi sea-raiders have shown a decided reluctance to meet up with anything except helpless freighters."

"You're gambling on long ends, Wynn."

I didn't feel half as confident and cocky as I sounded. Going down the winding staircase, I got to wondering if I were deliberately throwing away the lives of everyone on the ranch—something as Mike had done with his sailors when he tossed a slug into the bridge of the *Admiral Schneider*. Oh, it made a nice gesture! It was the stuff heroes did to get bronze plaques set up after they were gone. But did it make good, common sense? I was no hero, I knew that. I can fight like hell if mad enough, but could I fight coolly, intelligently, like a soldier. That's something we can't know until we're tested.

I was filled with doubts when I walked into the big living-room. The two women were there, and a moment later Higgins came in with two men. He introduced them as Pepe and Tomás. The former was a slim, wiry *roto* with a fixed grin, like a dog baring its teeth. Tomás was a heavy-set old man with whitening hair and great bushy black eyebrows and a heavy lower lip that reminded me of a villainous old lion. Neither understood a word of English.

Dame Montagu produced a large chart of the property and the approaches. She unrolled it on the big table, weighting the corners down with books. We gathered around the table.

As Sarah Montagu had already explained, there were two passes through the mountains by which the estancia could be attacked from the flank. I brought up the point.

Higgins didn't think the Germans would know about it. "H'if they know about the passes, then they bloody well know about La Querancia," he argued.

"What if Maté Cocido leads them through the mountains?" asked Shirley.

I looked at her. The persistent way she kept bringing the bandit into the picture suggested he was on her mind.

"Say, are you in love with that guy?" I blurted.

She turned pale with anger. "Mr. Wynn! I could . . ."

"Stop this bickering!" cut in the old lady. "You act like children! The Nazis can't get through the passes unless Maté brings them through, and he won't do

that. I know a thing or two about men!" She glanced at me and winked.

Higgins said: "The only h'other way they can come h'is by boat, Mr. Jeffrey. The bleedin' cliffs cawn't be climbed."

Pepe bent over the map and peered at it with myopic eyes. Suddenly he gave a grunt and stuck a bony finger on the entrance to the fiord. He spoke rapidly to Higgins. Higgins began to smile.

"Pepe suggests we put a couple of men on the cliffs above the mouth to throw rocks on the Nazis' boats h'as they comes h'into the lagoon."

Pepe bobbed his head like it was on springs.

"*Si, si, si!*" he babbled, although he had only a vague idea of what Higgins was talking about.

"All right," I agreed. "Stick a couple of men up there. But we can't have every man fighting this thing individually. If they spot the tanker's crew coming in small boats, have them signal by waving their ponchos. But they mustn't fire until they receive a signal from us. Tell them that, Higgins."

Higgins interpreted my order and it was received with much bobbing of heads. Pepe's smile grew wider until his wisdom teeth became visible. Then Tomàs asked a question.

"They want to know," repeated Higgins, "what our signal will be."

"Perhaps the hauling down of the flag," Sarah Montagu suggested. "It can be seen from almost anywhere on the estancia."

I grinned at her. "Thanks, Aunt Sarah. That's a great idea. Except we'll reverse it. When the flag goes up—the fireworks start!"

We completed our plan of defense, and then started to put it into effect. Pepe was dispatched to the cliffs above the entrance to the fiord. Later, through the telescope by the window, we could see him collecting a huge cairn of rocks. Tomás forked a wiry pony and vanished in the fields behind the house. Higgins put a half-dozen men to digging a trench and throwing up an embankment. I checked over the arsenal.

The guns were good, but old-fashioned. Fortunately, I learned from Higgins, Mike Reynolds had a large supply of dynamite cached up in the hills. He had planned to quarry rock and clear some of the outlying fields, and he had hoarded the explosives at the first hint of war on the supposition it might be difficult to obtain when needed. Higgins went up to the powder-cave and brought back enough to make up some crude bombs. We also laid a charge under the landing and ran the wires back to the trench.

By noon the work was well under way. Sarah Montagu sent Tonita down with a large basket of food. The workmen built a fire and boiled water for their *maté*. They passed the gourd around among themselves and finally it was offered to me.

"H'if you don't mind me s'ying so, you'd better taste the ruddy stuff. H'I know it's h'abominable but h'it's a sort of notion with them, like the pipe of peace you h'Americans smoke."

"We've given up the pipe of peace since the war," I told Higgins. I accepted the gourd and sucked up the stuff through the metal straw. They call it a *bombilla*. It tasted like very strong tea. The men all grinned and nodded their heads.

Higgins sat munching on a chicken leg with a puzzled expression on his red face. He kept looking at me and blinking.

"Well, what's the matter with you?" I asked him.

Higgins scratched his head. "H'I was just wonderin' after what war was that."

"Was what?"

"That you h'Americans gyve h'up the pipe o'peace. H'I 'adn't 'eard about it."

"The Indian War," I told him. "About three hundred years ago."

CHAPTER IX

THE SIEGE OF LA QUERANCIA

THE work was completed by mid-afternoon. The guns were all cleaned and ready; the men all placed in their positions. An American ensign was attached to the signal halyard. There was nothing to do except wait.

With Higgins and the two women, I waited in the big living-room, going over Uncle Mike's papers. It was difficult to concentrate at first, but soon I was lost in the story those old papers told of Mike Reynolds' early struggles. I found his rough-drawn sketches of the estancia. The duplicate lists of everything he had purchased. I found letters from my mother. I read one, then decided to leave the rest until I was alone.

A sea-captain to the core, Uncle Mike had kept a daily log. I thumbed through it to the place where he noted the rescue of Nels Lundstrom. This sentence leaped out of the carefully written page: *Lundstrom is a man. He will not be bluffed or intimidated.*

Will not be bluffed or intimidated! What a laconic epitaph! It almost seemed as though Mike had left that sentence for me. . . .

"Jeffrey!" Sarah Montagu called sharply. "They are coming!"

I ran over to the window. The sun was sinking fast. One side of the fiord was in blue shadow, the other rose-tinted in the waning light. The water was still and dark. Two gray lifeboats skimmed across the mirror-smooth surface of the water like a couple of gigantic water-bugs.

I counted the occupants through the telescope. Twelve in the first boat; eleven in the second. I turned from the glass and looked at Higgins. His customary oafish expression was gone. He looked alert and capable. He was smiling. I picked up my carbine.

"This is it!" I told him. "Let's go!"

We ran outside.

Through binoculars, I watched the tanker's two boats bear directly towards the floating wharf. They laid a scar across the glossy surface, like a silver zipper on blue satin. In the clear stillness, the *chuc-chuc-chuc* of the two-cycle engines carried plainly.

Higgins stood beside me, his legs apart, as though he were on the heaving bridge of a ship. He was holding a large brass megaphone. When the boats were about a hundred yards from the landing, I raised my rifle and laid four slugs a few feet in front of them. I saw the four tiny water spouts before the echo came out of the hills.

The lead boat veered sharply, and the motors went still. I traded Higgins the megaphone for the gun and stepped onto the embankment.

"Stand clear!" I shouted. "You can't land here!"

An officer in a black cap stood up in the stern-sheets of the first boat and cupped his hands in front of his mouth.

"Do not shoot!" he bellowed back in faltering English. "I want with the pilot of the plane to speak!" He gestured towards the Fairchild, moored near a little sloop to the west of the landing.

"Turn your boats around and get out!" I yelled. "If you come any closer we'll sink you."

The officer bent over and spoke to someone else in the other boat. After a couple of minutes he straightened and again made a horn of his hands.

"You are holding a *landsmann*—a countryman of ours. We haff to protect him come."

As he was speaking, I heard his engine turn over.

"Get out!" I warned him.

The officer shook his fist. "*Verflucht! Ergeben Sie sich!*"

" 'E says *damn you, surrender!*" Higgins translated. "H'I'd bloody well tell 'im to go to 'ell!"

I was raising the megaphone to my mouth when a seaman in the first boat whipped the tarp off a machine-gun and let her go. We saw the dirt dance even before we heard the clatter. I drove into the trench as the slugs churned across the ground where I had been standing.

"The ruddy . . .!" snarled Higgins and the crack of his carbine snuffed out his oath.

"Hold it!" I told him. "We'll get 'em on the wharf. Stand by that detonator. I'll tell you when to let her go."

IT was my hope that the two boats would range alongside the wharf. When they did, we could blow them out of the water. But the German officer must have anticipated a trap. A large metal shield was thrown up around the ma-

There was a flash, white smoke mushroomed up.

chine-gun in the bow of the first boat. Their engines coughed alive in unison. The boats changed courses, spread out and began running for the sandy beaches on opposite sides of the lagoon.

"They may flank us!" I warned Higgins. "Have half your men cover either shore. Fire slowly."

You're a hell of a general, Jeffrey, my boy! Once those babies get on solid ground, they'll get you in a nice lethal cross-fire!

The Germans were lying out of sight in the bottom of their boats. All but the gunner behind the screen. He was good. He kept a scythe-like blade of lead skimming the top of the trench.

As the angle of the boats widened, I realized that the trench wasn't such a hot idea. We had to rise above the edge to fire down the slope. If the machine-gun stayed put to cover a rush, we'd be caught neatly in the trench. *It will make one hell of a swell grave!*

The boat without the gun touched first. As it ran up onto the sand, the seamen piled out and dropped on the far side of it. I could see their rifles glinting in the evening sun. I sighted my carbine through a wedge in the embankment and got in two shots. One seaman jerked convulsively as he dove over the gunwale, but I wasn't sure it was a hit.

Then we lost our first man.

He was a wiry little gaucho named Benito, with a sharp face, sunken cheeks and a large black mustache, brown-stained on the fringe. Because he was short, he had scrambled onto a box and lifted himself above the level of the trench to get a better shot. He was the first man I ever saw die a violent death.

His eyes were shining with excitement. I suppose subconsciously I knew he was going to die for I was looking at him, instead of at the Nazis in the boat. I thought: *These are fine people. These men are loyal. They don't know who they are fighting, nor why.* He looked so very much alive. He had the flat of his leathery cheek pressed against his rifle stock. His left eye was squinted, almost closed. He was having a swell time. The machine-gun started to chatter again and as the earth spurted into the trench I ducked. He didn't. . . .

The first slug caught him above the ear, the next squarely in the temple, the third gouged his forehead. He seemed to press his eyes tight, like a child feigning sleep, and rolled off his perch. He fell against another man who was crouching down. This other man bent over to look at him in surprise.

This other man cried: *"Benito! Ay Dios mío!"* He tried to rouse Benito, then looked at me, as if he thought perhaps I could bring Benito back.

Well, General, what are you going to do now?

Higgins said: "If they wait till dark, they've bloody well got us."

He said it casually, without emotion of any kind. He looked around me at the dead man. "W'at a shyme!" he commented. "Benito was a likely lad." He turned away and poked his gun over the top. I thought him heartless until I saw how the vein in his throat was jerking.

Before I could say anything, I heard the German officer shouting. He was hidden behind the portable machine-gun shield.

"Unless at once you turn to us over *Herr Kapitaen von Faber,* and the English *Schweinehund,* we will destroy this farm! You hear?"

Higgins gave a short, nasty laugh. "The cheeky 'ound!"

The seven living men in the trench looked to me. They did not understand the words the German had spoken, but they must have known the music. The trench was almost dark at the bottom where Benito lay. I looked back at the house. Someone had hoisted the American flag to the pole-head. I picked up the megaphone.

"Try taking 'em!" I challenged.

The Nazi shouted a lot of words I could not understand. Higgins chuckled ruefully. He winked. "'E's mad, mad as 'ell!"

The sun was going down fast. The fiord resembled a pool of black ink. As I looked out on it, a great white albatross with black-tipped wings soared through the distant gateway and began to circle slowly.

The slope behind us leading to the house was still washed in sunlight. There was no escape that way as long as the machine-gun was stationed there to chop us down.

HIGGINS was peering through the binoculars. Suddenly, he pushed the glasses into my hands. As I took them, he pointed to the hill sloping down from the gateway on the fiord. There, on the bluff above and behind the beach where the machine-gun was cached, I could make out the crawling figure of a man.

"It's Pepe!" whispered Higgins. "Lor' bless 'im!"

I fixed my eyes to the lenses. "He's carrying something! It looks like the dynamite bomb we gave him!"

Higgins cursed softly. "The other boat crew will spot 'im sure!"

"They won't if we keep them busy. Start raising hell!" I told him. "Have

the men blaze away at both boats to hold their attention!"

Higgins spoke rapidly. I heard him mention Pepe's name. The men understood. They poked their rifles over the embankment and fired in the general direction of both boats. I took another look through the glasses.

Pepe was getting close to the edge. I saw him flatten. Then I saw the guarded flare of his match as he lit the fuse.

"He's ready!" I shouted. "When he tosses the bomb—get the hell out of this trap and run for the big house. There she goes . . .!

There was a flash! White smoke mushroomed up from the sand. Then the noise rolled up the slope and the ground shook. I glimpsed the metal shield lifted across the beach. . . .

"Now!" I yelled. "Run for it! The house, the house!"

We scrambled out of the trench and ran up the hill. We were halfway up before the shooting started again. It was rifle fire this time. The machine-gun was stilled.

Eight of us started. Six made the house. When I turned on reaching the porch, I saw one of our men trying to crawl up on his hands and knees. I started back, but Higgins grabbed me.

"Don't!" he pleaded. "They'll get you sure!"

He shouted something in Spanish. The wounded man stretched out and lay flat.

"We'll get 'im later," promised Higgins. " 'Ere they come!"

The Germans were spread out fan-shaped. They came rushing up the slope, firing spasmodically. I dropped to one knee and tried to pick off a man. The half-light was deceptive and I cursed the short barrel of the carbine. They had only about seventy-five feet to go in order to reach the shelter of the sheds. That would be dangerous. Under cover of darkness they could fire the house and pick us off like rabbits smoked out of a warren.

(To be continued)

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By

JOHN LAWRENCE

The little czar of Manhattan's Hardened Artery had run into plenty of cockeyed setups in his police career but this was the first time a chiseler had ever come to him and begged to be booted out of the precinct—pleaded to have sand poured in the gear-box of his profit machine while the long green still flowed in—and asked to be barred forever from returning to his flourishing lettuce bed. Then PETER PAIGE brings back Cash Wale in *Lady, Can You Spare a Corpse?;* T. T. FLYNN returns with *A Lesson from Madam Zorelda,* another carnival lot novelette; plus shorts by MAXWELL HAWKINS, CORNELL WOOLRICH and others.

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Monty, precariously enthroned, poured his drink in Davie's face. . . .

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A NOVELETTE By GORDON MacCREAGH

DAVIE MUNRO sat at the elegantly appointed table as uncompromisingly dour as ever did John Calvin in his most pestiferous mood and exhorted his partner Monty to abjure drink and its dire consequences.

"Or at all events," he added, since he knew the practical hopelessness of so much reform, "try to refrain from such boisterousness. Ye'll mind you're not in the brawling bar o' Williams' Hotel."

But Monty was being stirred by an emotion that recked nothing of caution. Querulously he shoved responsibility back upon Davie.

"Well, dash it all, who brought us here? I'd rather have celebrated the binge in congenial surroundings."

"Aye, and 'twas just for that reason," Davie told him sternly. "A man o' peace ye know me to be, and I brought you so to dine in decent propriety amongst gentlemen of your own class, hoping to avoid a brawl on this day. Besides which," he added cautiously, "I would have ye remember that yon fine gentle-

. . . While a hundred eyes watched the disgraceful exhibition.

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"Or at all events," he added, since he knew the practical hopelessness of so much reform, "try to refrain from such boisterousness. Ye'll mind you're not in the brawling bar o' Williams' Hotel."

But Monty was being stirred by an emotion that recked nothing of caution. Querulously he shoved responsibility back upon Davie.

"Well, dash it all, who brought us here? I'd rather have celebrated the binge in congenial surroundings."

"Aye, and 'twas just for that reason," Davie told him sternly. "A man o' peace ye know me to be, and I brought you so to dine in decent propriety amongst gentlemen of your own class, hoping to avoid a brawl on this day. Besides which," he added cautiously, "I would have ye remember that yon fine gentle-

. . . While a hundred eyes watched the disgraceful exhibition.

man at whom ye cast so angry an eye is Captain Bellairs that's just come to discuss a secret o' meelitary importance with no less than the Governor's nephew." And to that he appended cannily: "And if ye'd ask me, I'd say he's not a man to pick any easy fight with."

"The deuce I care who he says he is." Monty obstinately clung to his ill humor and offered the hint as to its cause by emphasizing the "says." "It's looking at that blighter that drove me to drown my just indignation."

Bubu Charlie, the other partner, presented a round face to ask with the shockingly solemn expression of a burrowing owl: "Blimey if I can see this day any bloomin' worse for getting into trouble than any blinkin' other."

"'Tis one occasion," said Davie with all the sorrow of an evangelist who must recognize the power of Sin, "that I had proposed to celebrate without a dees-graceful exhibeetion."

He was stolidly unconscious of the fact that his very presence with his two companions in the dining-room of the Hotel Elite was furnishing a disgraceful exhibition to the aloof habitués.

For the place was Nairobi in East Africa; and the British race, along with all the other sturdy qualities that they carry to their colonies when they take up the white man's burden, add to it by saddling themselves with an extraordinary exaggeration of their already sufficiently stiff social conventions that must establish the prestige of the ruling race. The eminently respectable dining-room of the Elite, therefore, averted its eyes as from some obscenity.

The three—rank outsiders, by Jove—were not dressed for dinner!

DAVIE MALCOLM MUNRO, raised in a piously thrifty Scots manse, had never owned a dress suit, nor was ever likely to expend any such unnecessary money.

Monty, it must be dolefully recorded, had in his day possessed many such. But the term, "progressive desuetude," has not been invented by American automobile manufacturers; it has been applied, long before automobiles, to the all too easy career of white men who let the insidious depreciation of the tropics seep into their blood. The Hon. Montague Forsythe was aristocracy inhibited by the caste laws of British primogeniture and run just a bit to seed—and sufficiently resentful to be cynically unashamed of it.

Bubu Charlie was frankly of the "lower classes" and accordingly knew sinuous by-ways and evasive paths of African trade that never came within the ken of the lofty ruling class.

"I had hoped, and belike foolishly," Davie reprimanded the two of them in the rising voice inherited from his good missionary father, "that ye would be keeping the peace in this place; for we are celebrating, ye'll mind, the recovery from thieves and malefactors of our uniforms that's our stock in trade for a fine beesiness, and our formal incorporation this day of the trading firm of Davie, Montague and Charles."

Davie remained blissfully unconscious of the social blunder of introducing "trade" into an atmosphere where the elite foregathered to dine and wine as gentlemen should. A gentleman at a farther table who dined no more indiscreetly than a gentleman might with propriety in the thirsty tropics, let his laugh rise above the shocked hush engendered by Davie's exhortation.

"Montague and Charles! Ye little gods!" There was just a shade of innuendo in the exclamation. The gentleman did not include Davie's name. Davie was too new in Africa; the man knew nothing about him.

Davie turned his head in that direction. A hundred eyes properly looked into blankness or blankly looked through him. Davie slowly unlimbered himself. With the massive deliberation of a derrick he made his way between the tables. His long face was impassive as the statue of Wellington's horse in the town square, he stood and looked down at the humorous diner. His voice was suddenly as gentle as a preacher wooing a sinner to repentance.

"Ye would not be laughing at my friends now?"

The gentleman retorted in strict adherence to the code of gentlemen.

"Sir, I do not know you. I do not

propose to have any words with you."

Davie's voice remained gently persuasive. "I will put it then, directly," he said. "Ye shall not laugh at my friends."

He returned methodically to his table and sat down. Monty raised his brimming glass in salute. "Laddie," he said. "I have intended to compliment you before. For a man reared in the pious light of peace, and without even the little fillip imparted by a few good drinks, you set me a glorious example. I shall therefore toddle over and call that so-called captain fellow's bluff, if you know what I mean."

"I do not," said Davie firmly. "And ye will not. We are embarking upon a joint beesiness that should pay us a fine profit, and I will not have ye ruin it by winning the hosteelity of them that sit in the high places."

"The high places, old chap," Monty announced the caste to which he had once belonged, "are for gentlemen." And he told then what it was that so stirred his just wrath.

"That bounder is wearing the old Colchester tie!"

BUBU CHARLIE, a little awed himself by the illustrious company of his betters and belonging to a class utterly unable to understand Monty's indignation, was respectfully sober. Crassly plebeian, he said:

"What the 'ell's it matter what tie a gent in a orficer's uniform wears? And 'ow the 'ell d'you know it ain't 'is own?"

"Damn it all!" Monty fumed. "That's my old school. And I know dashed well the fellow isn't entitled to it." With the meticulous care of a man who must watch his hand, he filled his glass again.

Davie was sufficiently in sympathy to let it pass. "Aye, 'tis a foul thing, if so," he agreed. "'Tis as bad, nearly, as a Southron Englisher taking the tartan. But," the canny instinct of business overruled principle, "'tis not a thing for which to ruin a fine profit."

"Why, you bawbee-pinching Scotchman! The deuce with profit in a case like this." Monty was tipsily belligerent. "I'm going over to expose the rotter."

"S c o t s," Davie said patiently. "'Scotch' is but an English meespronunciation o' our language, as I've told ye before. And ye will not expose any rotter, nor get us into a calamitous brawl. Ye will come away and we will leave our deesgrace behind us."

He put a hand on Monty's arm to lead him from the place. Monty knew that he couldn't hope to struggle with Davie. But he wrapped his feet around the legs of his chair and clung with one hand to the seat while the other obstinately clutched his half-finished drink.

Davie knew as well as anybody the difficulty of disentangling a man from an anchorage of that sort. Still, with the patience of a righteous man who must excuse the many faults of his friends, he said only: "Och well, there are other ways."

He slipped behind Monty quickly, smoothly, for all of his bulk. He put his hands, one to the chair's back, the other high up to one leg. Phenomenal hands. Massive protuberances from inadequate cuffs, blotched with lemon freckles and beforested with sandy hairs. He grunted once and heaved up chair and man together, hoisted them shoulder high, and silently picked a ponderous way between the tables towards the door.

A hundred eyes managed, with supreme control, to look politely bored at so disgraceful an exhibition. But they were quite unable to look blankly through it.

Monty, enthroned, swayed dizzily. He struggled furiously against nothing to combat. He looked from his eminence to consider a jump. He was not so drunk as not to realize that he couldn't entirely trust his feet for such a leap, yet just drunk enough to cling to his obsession of bringing to book a desecrator of the staunch old public school ethics. Impelled by an indomitable adherence to his impulse, he twisted around and adroitly poured his unfinished drink into Davie's face.

"*Tighearna Dia!*" Davie called upon the Lord in anguish. Blinded, he fumbled to set the chair down before he must drop it. Monty quite nimbly stepped from it and weaved his way to the table where Captain Bellairs sat. It

was a sublime effort of determination to draw himself up and face the man accusingly.

CAPTAIN BELLAIRS sat and looked at him with well-bred disgust. It was unavoidable to note that the two men were of a type. Bellairs, as a matter of fact, was a replica of Monty. He had the same lithe height, the same aristocracy of feature, even the same neatly clipped military mustache, approximately the same age.

But he was, as Davie had cannily warned Monty, harder, infinitely more fit; his eyes were clear and alert, his mouth a tight line. Altogether a grim and purposeful man. He was what Monty would have been if the tropics had not gotten to him.

Monty faced him with the dogged principle of a gentleman who accuses another gentleman of subterfuge at cards.

"Sir, I demand to know what years you were at Colchester."

Captain Bellairs met the distasteful situation with admirable coolness.

"I do not concede your right to question me," he said.

Monty held himself carefully together. "It is not a matter of concession, sir," he said. "I only make the statement before these other gentlemen here that there can exist no conceivable occasion when a public school man should not divulge his year."

The cool blankness of Captain Bellairs' eyes glittered with the quick anger of a proud man hounded to do something against his will. He said nothing.

But polite murmurs came from other tables. "Of course not." "Insolent fellow but—" "Never ashamed of the old school."

An impeccable gentleman from a nearby table came to stand beside the captain, almost as though offering his services as a second in a duel.

"I apologize, sir," he said, "on behalf of our community. Permit me to suggest that you satisfy this fellow's unwarranted rudeness, and we'll have him thrown out."

Captain Bellairs' eyes glittered for just a second amongst the nearer tables and convinced him of the universal sentiment. He shrugged.

"I was at Colchester from nineteen-eleven to seventeen," he said through gritted teeth.

All of Monty's unsteadiness passed from him. Extraordinarily, as he stiffened himself to stern accusation, the mark of Africa and its unwise living passed from him. He stood as one of the caste to which he belonged.

"I publicly accuse you then, sir," he announced firmly, "of claiming an honor to which you are not entitled."

Captain Bellairs acted with deadly efficiency. One of the prides of the Hotel Elite was its heavy silver ash and match containers that graced the center of every table. All in one clean move, Captain Bellaire rose from his chair, scooped up the silver container and curved it to Monty's temple.

It was heavy enough to click—it didn't ring—like a billiard ball. Monty quietly crumpled to the carpet.

Captain Bellairs bowed stiffly to the two sides of the room. Deadly polite, he said: "I do not find myself at ease in a place where such people can gain access." He walked with huffy dignity from the room. He left behind him shocked murmurs of indignation that a stranger within the gates should have been so insulted.

"Disgusting scene!" "What the country is coming to—" "Management should bar such low fellows." "Serves this insufferable bounder right."

Large black Kikuyu waiters in starched white clothes came and laid hands on the fallen white man, carried him out. Davie had already been pushed, fumbling, to the door, with Bubu Charlie steering him, loud in lurid profanity.

The disgrace was complete.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY MISSION

IN their room in Williams' where low fellows of the trader class were permitted, Davie bathed an egg the size of a billiard ball on Monty's temple.

With the malicious unction of righteousness he quoted in a sort of rhythm, keeping time to his spongings: "Who hath woe?" *Splash, splash!* "Who hath sorrow?" *Trickle, swash!* "Who hath contentions?" *Drip, squish!* Half of it in the grim Gaelic as he remembered it best: *"Co a ta ri gearan? Co aig am bheil lotan gun aobhar?* Who hath wounds without cause?"

And he gave the merciless answers as laid down in the Book. "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."

Monty groaned.

"I will not at this time be reproving you for pouring your liquor in my face," Davie said, "for ye have won your own reproof with this grand ding to your head; nor will I at present be saying a word about the fine deesgrace ye have brought upon the new firm o' Davie, Montague and Charles."

Monty groaned again but he was in no way contrite. "Dash it all, there are some decencies left in the world. A fellow can't let a fellow claim the old school when he hasn't the faintest sort of claim, don't y' know."

"Aye," said Davie. "'Twas a right fine skelp ye got that knocked the little sense ye had left in your head last night. This same Captain Bellairs that you're miscalling dined the night before with the Governor himself."

"But I tell you the fellow is an impostor." Monty's indignation rose again over so dastardly a besmirching of the gentlemanly tradition.

"What the ruddy 'ell does it matter if 'e says 'e built the blarsted place?" Bubu Charlie was still swearing luridly over the night's doings. "You picked a bruiser and you got all you arsked for."

"Good God!" Monty clutched out at the empty air. "He asks what a thing like that matters!" He turned to Davie for understanding. "You can get some glimmering of it, old man, can't you, even though you were never one of us?"

Davie humored his agitation. "I am not understanding how you would be knowing such about the fine gentleman's past to name him an impostor."

"Damn it all, the rotter said he was at Colchester till nineteen-seventeen!"

"And why might he not?"

"Why, hell, that was my own year! I ought to remember it well enough. That was the year they jolly well expelled me."

Bubu let go a yelp of plebeian delight. "They 'eaved you out of the 'igh tone shop, eh? What'd yer do to rile 'em?"

"Oh, just a binge. Young Twombley and I—he's Lord Braithwaite now—we hid a Guy Fawkes in the chapel vestry till the fifth of November fireworks and the dashed thing blew up. Horrid sacrilegious, don't y' know."

Bubu yelled his impious delight, but Davie was very serious.

"Ye would not be making any mistake now?"

"Not a doubt in the world, old chap. And if there were, there's the proof in the rotter's own action. If he were a public school boy he would have hit me decently with his fist; not with a weapon, like some bally foreigner."

DAVIE scowled at Monty's triumphant conviction and saw none of it. His mind was focused with his eyes, away into something much more serious than a fraudulent claim to a proud old school. His lips pinched on the problem.

At last he said slowly: "Ye are sober enough now. So we'll take it that yon captain is not altogether on the up and up—and he is here to talk some mission o' meelitary importance with the Governor's nephew."

"Good Lord!"

"Gorblimey!"

Monty and Bubu both expressed their shock at the sinister implication upon which Davie had put his finger. They stared at him, suddenly serious, as he stared out at nothing.

Monty was the first to have any relevant comment about it, and his thought didn't help matters.

"I must say, old man, you do think of the damnedest things! And, now that you mention it, this nephew youngster, Ransome, is a good deal of a bloody fool. What I mean, he can't take his liquor like a gentleman."

Davie rolled a humorless eye at him. Monty hurried to explain the vital dif-

ference. "I mean to say, he goes right under, you know."

"Nor what 'e don't know about Africa is less even than the blarsted coppers." Bubu spat in thoughtful aggrievement over social injustice. "Why the 'ell they brings a bloke straight out o' college and shoves 'im into a important diplomatic job beats me; while the likes of us 'as to sweat our 'ides to do a bit of honest trade."

"Aye," said Davie dryly. "That's the grand old tradeetion. It's the ruling classes that must do the ruling." He scowled again into blankness. "What, think you, might be this mission?"

"Native *habari,*" Bubu offered, "was saying that this Bellairs is a *kapitani wa madini* and 'e came from up Rudolf side special to meet Ransome."

"Oho!" Monty sucked his mustache as though to draw in an evasive idea. "A military mining engineer, eh? And native talk is likely enough to be right about a thing like that. Lake Rudolf? Right on the Ethiopian border."

"Enemy controlled territory." Davie could think of the most sinister implications, too, to the damnedest things.

"You know," Monty hazarded the helpful thought, "I think we'd better ask to see the Governor, and I'll tell him who this Bellairs is—I mean, at least, who he is definitely not."

Davie rolled the bleak eye at him. "After the fine doings of last night?"

Bubu Charlie snorted. "Might as well arsk an audience with 'is Majesty."

Davie had the more practical amendment to the motion.

"But we might go see Sergeant Forbes o' the constabulary."

Monty raised his eyebrows to shrug a not too hopeful acceptance. "Not a bad sort, Forbes—though bound solid in red tape."

"Anyhow," said Bubu, "'e isn't any dumber than the rest of the coppers, and 'e does at least give us credit for not being bloody thieves and murderers."

SERGEANT FORBES was taking his ease in his whitewashed office, his uniform tunic open. He was sympathetic but officially judicious. He shook his head. "You boys are aiming at high birds, and you've got just about nothing for ammunition."

"But, dammitall, Forbes, the Governor will appreciate the enormity of a thing like this; he's an Eton boy himself, you know."

"It's a stiff charge you're making there and you've got nothing to prove it," Forbes said.

"But I tell you I was there myself. You could cable and verify."

"A pretty long time ago, that; and a man can forget when he's lived in the tropics as, er—as long as you have, and —could I say, as recklessly?"

Davie grimly concluded the quotation that had so pungently pointed up his ministrations to Monty's head. "At the last it biteth as a serpent and stingeth as an adder."

Monty remained quite unabashed by it.

"Meaning the consequences of sin, old thing? I haven't broken up quite that much. I can assure you this fellow wasn't there."

"Colchester is a big school," Forbes said. "Can you be sure that there was no Bellairs there during the time he claims?"

"Positive, my dear fel—" Monty's jaw suddenly dropped. "Come to think of it, there was. Bunny Bellairs. But—" his confidence came doggedly back—"not this fellow. Bunny was a ratty little black-browed chap. This fellow is a big blond."

Forbes threw up his hands. "Well, there you are. You admit there was a Bellairs and all you base your suspicion on is that you don't think he would have grown up to look like this one. Really now, Forsythe, you don't expect me to take up so frivolous a charge against a man accepted by the Governor."

Davie nodded. "Aye, he's right."

Forbes added a reason to substantiate his stand. "And you fellows will have to admit—while I may personally have some faith in your integrity—that your reputations are, let us say, a bit startling even for traders. They scarcely recommend you for serious official consideration."

Davie stalked up and down the room, his hands folded behind him, tunelessly

whistling a rhythm that seemed to have neither melody nor variation. Monty's frazzled nerves broke in irritation.

"Dash it all, you don't have to make a ghastly Scotch noise about it."

Davie broke off only for a second to say the one word, "Scots," and continued his inharmonious stalking. Till sheer repetition settled his mind to practical thinking. He bulked big and solid over the officer, almost as though to intimidate him.

"Well now, assuming that overmuch deessipation has not softened our Monty's head, how much would you tell us about this secret mission that might add up to make four?"

"No reason why I shouldn't tell you all we know." Forbes laughed ruefully. "Bubu here would find it out through the native grapevine anyhow. This Bellairs wrote in that he had discovered quite a deposit of wolframite back in the hills there. So the Governor sent for him to come in and guide young Ransome—an M. E. himself, you know, honorary rank of major—to check up. Because if Bellairs' estimate is anywhere near right, we'll have something."

MONTY reached back into the maze of useless knowledges imparted by an English public school. "Wolframite? Ore of tungsten, isn't it?"

"Aa-ah!" said Davie. "So that's why it's a meelitary secret."

"Only secret about it so far is the actual location. That was detailed in Bellairs' letter, but the administration is keeping that to themselves."

"Because," said Davie shrewdly, "there's other folks besides our colonial administration would be interested in tungsten."

"Well then, there it is." Monty leaned over to pound conviction into Forbes' desk with his finger. "It all adds up, don't you see? This bounder who says he's Bellairs has, er—ah—" Monty couldn't make it add up.

Sergeant Forbes laughed. "No, I don't see it at all, Forsythe. You'd have to have something more convincing to show me Bellairs isn't Bellairs before I'd stick my official neck into a charge of that sort." He rose from his chair and stretched his shoulders. "Gentlemen, good-day."

"Tell me one thing." Davie turned at the door. "When does yon Ransome go, and with whom?"

Forbes laughed again, a little deprecatingly. "Oh, just with a valet. Local man named Meers; was with the Fredericks expedition. Bellairs will make up a small safari; this is no hunting trip. Be trekking out in a couple of days, I expect."

Outside, Monty let his exasperation go. "Another damned thick-headed Scotchman. Won't see what you shove under his nose unless he thought of it himself first."

"A fine cautious Scot," Davie corrected him, unperturbed, "that must bear in mind the deessipated reputation o' the Honorable Montague Forsythe."

Bubu cut in to forestall argument. "Well, *you* believe Monty's right. So what are we bloomin' well going to do about it?"

"We will e'en walk circumspectly," Davie said. "For yon Bellairs, whoever he is, is a fast thinking and a fierce man. Aye, a dangerous tall lad."

He walked accordingly between them, thick fingers around the upper arm of each. He whistled his thin inharmonies and the flutter of his fingers as though he were playing them on an instrument caused their nerves to wince.

"Let me see, now. Tungsten, and close to an enemy border, eh? Bubu, what was this Fredericks expedition?"

"Geographic blokes, making map surveys and such."

"How long ago?"

"Three seasons back."

"Oho!" Davie walked and whistled. "Could it be now that they were mapping routes and water holes? Spying out the land, ye might say. And could the name not once have been Friedrich?"

"Good Lord!" Monty jerked to a stop and stared at Davie. He repeated an earlier astonishment. "Laddie, you do get the damnedest thoughts."

" 'Tis keeping seenful company," Davie said as soberly as a beer wagon horse, "that undermines Chreestian charity. So then, could the name Meers not have been Meyers? But I don't yet

guess where yon Bellairs that was never at your school fits in. Only a muckle ferocious blond man might—Let me think now—"

"Good God!" Monty stood appalled.

Bubu was never one to wrestle with intricate processes of reasoning. He said: "Gor sink me! What do we stand 'ere for? What are we going to do about it?"

"Well, now." Davie arrived at a reasonable course of action. "We can't get to the Governor, but we can get to this Ransome lad that the aristocracy honors with the rank of a major, and we can warn him to keep his eyes open."

"Don't count too much." Monty said mutinously, "on the brightness of the aristocracy, old man. That's why I dropped out. Bubu, you know where this chappie lives, don't you?"

" 'E's got the use of some rich planter's 'ouse a couple miles down the Nyeri road. I can find it."

CHAPTER III

FIGHT AND RUN

THE house was a typical suburban colonial in a land where other disadvantages must be offset by comfortable living. It was raised off the ground against dampness; it nestled, with that privacy so dear to the Englishman, in its own little Eden of shrubbery.

The three crusaders stood at the outer edge to debate just how they should intrude.

" 'Arf a mo," said Bubu. "Lemme go spy out the land for a change." With the quick stealth of a Hottentot he scuttled through the shrubbery, reached his hands to what looked like a drawing-room window, chinned himself and peered in.

Monty was shocked. His whisper was urgent to the point of indiscretion.

"Oh, I say! Bubu, don't do that. That kind of thing just isn't done, don't y' know."

Bubu dropped, scuttled back. He grinned hardy shamelessness. "I got no need to act like a blinkin' gentleman; I ain't in the class. And right useful it is at a time like this. Listen. Ransome's in there, drunk as a bloomin' lord mayor; enough bottles to keep me and Monty a month; and a mongoose-lookin' bloke got 'is uniform tunic open and fishing in the inside pockets."

"Come on!" Davie charged through and over careful gardening with no more circumspection than the wagon horse. The door, of course, was locked. But there was a bell. Davie covered the whole fixture with a spatulate thumb and kept it pressed there.

In the interior a bell trilled and kept on trilling till its dry batteries began to run down. Natives passing in the road stopped to stare. The last thing that a man who explored inner pockets might want to do would be attract attention. Steps came. The door opened a crack.

Davie put his hand on it and swung it so that the mongoose-looking man's feet against it slid a grating arc over the floor. The hallway was as wide as an ordinary living-room and as well furnished. Doorways from which the doors had been removed and replaced by curtains gave an indication of the incongruous interior publicity of an Englishman's private castle.

The man showed little teeth in the silent snarl of a mongoose. He said: "The major is enjoying his privacy, sirs. He is not seeing visitors."

"So it haply seems," said Davie. "But visitors are seeing him. You will be the man, Meers, is it not?"

"Yes," said the man savagely, and it was an effort to add the "sir."

"Awee-el then," Davie told him very gently, "the major will be interested to know that his valet searches his pockets while he lies in the revolting condition o' drunkenness."

Meers backed as lithely as a mongoose that faces three determined cobras at once. He stood before the drawing-room curtain, showing his little white teeth, and his hand that in one clean move unbuttoned his vest and slipped under it indicated another weapon of offense.

"You are not allowed to disturb my master."

He spoke with the very faintest of accents that Monty was immediately able to recognize as something not English.

"Ha! So it is Meyers," he said, and he whoofed out a breath. "Gad, laddie, I've been afraid we were walking into more trouble than we could easily lie ourselves out of. But now we've got two and two to add up jolly well right."

Meers—or Meyers—backed all the way to the curtain, his eyes as vicious as a trapped animal. The three could see his hand bunch to a fist over whatever it was that he had under his vest.

And then the curtain swayed and Ransome stood there, swaying with it and holding on to it for support.

"What the deuce is this intrusion?"

HE evinced the petulant peeve of a man who knows himself to be helpless. His military tunic, as Bubu had reported, was open to the waist—obviously not for comfort or he would have undone all of the shiny buttons. He pressed his hand to his forehead.

"Phee-ew, Meers! That last one you mixed must have been a daisy." His voice remained astonishingly coherent, though he gulped as though about to be sick.

Righteousness overcame Davie. "Aye, and to such they entrust the important affairs of nations."

Monty drove his elbow into Davie's ribs. He took charge, as speaking to a social equal.

"We apologize for the intrusion, sir. It was necessitated by some urgent information that we have to give you."

The major closed his eyes; a shudder heaved through his frame. "Show these ruffians out, Meers," he ordered.

The valet showed only his teeth.

"We can wait, sir," Monty said, "till a more favorable occasion. The information is vital to your mission."

The major clung to the curtain. "Show them—" He choked and was as horribly sick as he had threatened to be.

Another intrusion came. It bounded up the chaste white wooden steps, in through the wide open door and well into the big hallway, all in one quick rush. Bellairs, of course. He was breathing hard; he must have hurried. But he looked as poised and dangerous as a leopard.

The major opened his eyes. "Oh, hello, Bellairs," he said weakly. "Just in time."

Captain Bellairs snapped to a salute.

Davie felt the challenge of the man burn through his righteous indignation. "Aye," he said sourly. "A fine thing ye're saluting."

Bellairs' glare on his was savage.

"A soldier salutes the uniform," he said. His distaste for duty snarled from him; but he added viciously: "And defends it."

"That's right," said Ransome. "Throw the ruffians out, Bellairs. Dashed if I know who they are." He hiccuped hugely. "Prob'ly some more crooks come to steal that letter." He grinned a vacuous triumph. "But none of 'em's goin' to find that letter. Important. Dashed important."

"I urge you, sir," Monty said. "The information we have is—"

Quick-thinking Bellairs was as deadly in his efficiency as he had already demonstrated on Monty. He needed no more than a hint. "Get 'em, Meyers," he shouted. "They mustn't get away!"

The last word came with a grunt as

he snatched a short rubber blackjack from somewhere about his person, so fast that you couldn't see where he had kept it, and swung it to Bubu's neck.

"No noise, Meyers! Shut that door!"

Bubu reeled away, clawing vaguely at nothing. Davie jumped for Bellairs. The blackjack lashed out at his face as fast and viciously as a snake. Davie got his left arm up just in time. The whole arm numbed to the thing's impact. Then his other hand closed on Bellairs' fist that held it.

The man was as lithe as a leopard and as strong. He wrenched his fist with that up-and-over twist that breaks almost any grip. Davie hunched his shoulders forward and let the strength flow into his thick fingers. Bellairs winced. But he was not for a moment thinking himself in any trouble yet.

He shouted again: "Get the other fellow, Meyers! No noise! I can handle this ox." He smashed his other fist at Davie's face. Hard and with the crunching impact of another blackjack. Again he smashed it, and ferociously again.

Davie had but the one effective hand; the other still tingled with a dull numbness. He turned the side of his head to the blows and twisted on Bellairs' imprisoned hand. Bellairs suddenly yelled.

He quit his furious punching at Davie's face and clapped that hand over Davie's. With all the force of both his arms he wrenched to free himself.

Ransome was being deathly sick again. He couldn't help, but he weakly bubbled Bellairs' refrain.

"Get him, Bellairs! That's it! Do the ruffian up!" And he had no inhibitions against noise. "Police!" he spluttered. "Thieves! . . . Meers, telephone for help."

DAVIE'S twisting went on like a machine, slowly against the full resistance of Bellairs' both arms, but inch by inch backwards and up. Over Bellairs' shoulder he could see Monty with the Meyers man, his both hands on the valet's wrist, desperately holding off that extra weapon that had been beneath the vest, a short broad knife blade that would cut a gash like a sword.

It flashed to him like a moment of prayer that Monty might have one tenth of the stamina to resist that his own antagonist displayed. He was as powerless to go to Monty's help as though it were Bellairs who held him in a remorseless bear trap, not he Bellairs. He dared not let go of that blackjack.

Bellairs yelled again and writhed, and for the first time there was a fear in his arrogant eyes; a fear mixed with so much of incredulous surprise that it seemed to Davie this must be the first time in that fierce man's life that he had found cause to doubt his own success.

The big hallway-room offered a scene extraordinarily at variance with the usual turmoil of men in a fight to the death. Almost static. No action, no stamping and upsetting of furniture. Only men, feet wide apart, slowly straining. Bubu sitting up, his head loose on his neck. Ransome, for the moment not spluttering for police, weakly retching.

So static that the tremor in Davie's arm as he poured his full strength into his twisting grind was a major movement. Till Bellairs' arm was so far around that he could no longer bring the assistance of his other hand to bear. An excruciated curse hissed between his teeth and he had to let go.

Then it went fast. Davie forced the imprisoned hand around and high between Bellairs' shoulder blades. Bellairs groaned, bent back like a bow. Davie let go the blackjack hand, let his fist travel the remaining six inches to the back of his head. Bellairs pitched forward on his face.

Davie rushed across to Monty's losing fight. The broad blade was trembling six inches from his throat. Davie whirled his one good arm round the Meyers man's waist, tore him bodily from Monty and slung him. The man spun in a low arc to crunch into the angle of the wainscot.

Monty leaped after him to get the knife. The indomitable nonchalance of his race panted from him. "Thanks a lot, old man." Davie plunged to possess himself of the blackjack and to search Bellairs for a likely gun. Bubu was standing up, weaving on his feet. Ransome was able to splutter again.

"Police! Thieves!"

Davie found the expected gun, a deadly seven-millimeter Luger. Monty's voice came sharp and strained: "Davie! Here, quick!"

Davie stepped over, keeping an eye still on Bellairs; he gave that man credit for any quick recuperation. Monty said: "Davie, he's—I don't know—the way he crunched when he fell!"

"Police!" Ransome's voice cleared to a shout. "Murderers!"

"Shut up, you blasted fool!" Monty snarled at him. "Bubu, stuff his mouth, can you? Laddie, I think this one is—"

Davie knelt beside Monty. Meyers lay along the wainscot angle in the utter limpness of a rat. The broad knife still rested across his open fingers.

"Did he—fall on it?" Davie's whisper was suddenly tight in his throat.

"Police!" Ransome shouted.

Bubu dizzily struggled with him. The babble of native voices from the servants' huts sounded in the compound, alarmed but still unwilling to butt into the affairs of the white lords.

"No," Monty said. "There's no blood on the blade. Something must be badly broken somewhere."

"Murder! Police! Help!"

Monty's wits in an emergency always sharpened to the keenness that they had to have in order to survive twenty years of picaresque living in Africa. He said: "We've got to get out of here quick. Out and well away. We'll never be able to explain this."

He pushed Davie to the door. Davie stumbling, drunker with horror than ever Monty had been with hooch.

"Here, take Bubu's other arm," Monty ordered crisply. "We've got to grab some gear and bush up." Then, at the step: "Here, hold him." He shoved Bubu into Davie's nerveless arm, dashed back into the house, tore the telephone wires out by their roots. He dashed back. "Come on!"

Davie hardly knew that he was walking, half dragging Bubu between them; presently running; presently Bubu needed no support. He panted: "What 'appened? Did we kill the blighter?"

It was characteristic that it never occurred to him to dodge any share of the joint responsibility.

Monty was desperately holding off Meyers' knife.

"Don't know," said Monty. "'Fraid so."

They ran along in heavy silence. Then, "Beniqwa scrub will be the place," Bubu said. "Take 'em ten years to comb that through. Better take the truck and plenty supplies."

THE light safari truck always remained in one of the hotel sheds, loaded and ready for any sudden venture where the alert earliest bird might get all the pickings and the next comer none at all. It required only the hurried snatching up of some personal gear, the stirring up of their camp boys.

Gog and Magog, burly scamps and faithful, slept as Africans and animals do, through the day when not eating or compelled to work. Still dazed with sleep, unquestioning, they packed themselves in their accustomed corner of the truck like twin great apes in a blanket.

The truck roared to life. Williams, the hotel proprietor, stuck his head out of the back door to see which of his patrons were leaving. When he saw he shrugged.

"See you again when I see you, I suppose?"

"It'll be some time, I expect," Monty said grimly.

"Trouble again?"

"Plenty."

"Well, send a boy in quiet when you need anything."

"Thanks, old chap."

The truck lurched out. A clean getaway before ever an alarm reached the town. Bubu drove. "Strike north till come dark," he said laconically. "Then break west to the Beniqwa."

Within the half-hour the truck was in the rolling hill country of settler farms, prosperous and eminently respectable, therefore hostile to traders. Any one of them, apprised by telephone, would have come out with a rifle and done his duty upholding the law.

Bubu drove past them, his round face as black as a clock. He wanted to be seen and later duly reported. The farms began to thin out; they were in the wider stretches of sheep grazing country. Scrub patches were here; thorny mimosa thickets that offered something of concealment. Bubu drove straight ahead with complete concentration.

Scarcely a word was said. For one reason, each of the three had his own thoughts to collect and sort out of their confusion. For another, a truck driven at speed over lumpy detritus and bunch grass tussocks demands all of a man's attention to hold his breath from being jolted out of him.

Once Bubu grunted: "If the blarsted springs only 'old out."

"New last month," Monty said.

Later, Davie had sufficiently recovered the normal instinct of escape to ask: "Could they not trail our tire tracks?"

"Night's dew will wipe 'em out. Good thing we got a moon too."

The tall shadows of umbrella-topped acacias moved out of their circle about the stem, became long cones, raced across the plain; and there the tropic night suddenly was. With it the cool two-blanket breeze that makes the Kenya uplands to be coveted by other nations that, less alert, came late and got nothing at all worth while out of the African pickings.

Bubu cut to the west. Black moon shadows showed him what to avoid. Smaller shadows jumped out of the emptiness before the truck, neighed, grunted, squealed, blundered away.

Bubu drove with the uncanny foresight of an imp of darkness. He couldn't have seen the necessary miles ahead; it was a sixth sense of the bush that let him know where to head so that their route would not suddenly be cut by some dry donga, scoured fifty feet deep by the last rains and stretching perhaps half as many miles; or where the ever thickening patches of mimosa scrub might pocket them in a blind *cul-de-sac*.

When it became too intricate at last Bubu pulled up. "Beniqwa beginnings," he grunted. "We'll find us a better 'ole come daylight; and me, I can bloody well sleep till then."

"All of us will be clearer in the head by tomorrow," Monty said.

CHAPTER IV

GHOST MUSIC

"GRUB before gab," Monty wisely said. "No man is rightly awake before his spot of tea and a dash of marmalade."

Gog and Magog, well trained, had already set up a folding camp-table and opened canvas chairs. A fire of minimum smoke burned under the old five-gallon kerosene can, black from the good old days when smoke didn't matter. Branches that overhung from the close crowding mimosa trees had been cut so that bugs would not fall into the breakfast. Altogether a scene of a cozy little picnic.

Monty's was good advice but Davie took little advantage of it. The effort to eat choked his throat.

"What the 'ell, chum." Bubu tried to impact some of his own hardy fatalism. "The blighter was some kind of a ruddy foreigner at best."

"Aye," said Davie heavily. "But he that smiteth a man that he die, is a murderer."

Monty's spot and dash had brought back some of the unbeatable resilience of his race. He said: "Well now, laddie, you mustn't take this too hard. They

used to beat a good deal of that stuff into me in the days of my puling youth, and wasn't there something about the Lord defending the right?"

Davie looked at him with the dawning hope of a sinner who sees that salvation exists but is doubtful yet as to its availability for his own enormities.

Monty chuckled. "Prove anything out of that Book. If I had not contrived to avoid so much of my own religious education I'd find you a hundred good reasons to clear your conscience. Let it rest, laddies. You must learn to control the pestilent thing. The right salty little job on hand just now is to clear ourselves. We must get our wits together; we're in a spot this time that'll take some jolly clear thinking. But first let's send the boys out."

He called Gog and Magog. "Go out," he told them. "Find a village. Learn what there is of *habari* and say nothing."

"*N'dio Bwana.* We shall be as silent as snakes."

Davie looked after their retreating forms, his eyes troubled.

"Would not some village native carry information to the constabulary?"

"Natives," Monty shook his head, "will tell the police practically nothing; and damn little to us, unless something particularly gets through the black skin, and no white man can ever guess just what queer little nothing might do that. So, now then, my hearties, let us debate what to do."

Bubu had his experience of the law. "We claim self-defense," he offered. "The swine would 'ave knifed you."

"Not good enough. Bellairs will swear our necks into a noose with Ransome his best witness that we did a killing in the course of an attempted robbery."

Even Bubu shivered at that. "'E did 'arp on the robbery idea, didn't 'e?"

Davie, his conscience at least partially appeased, was beginning to think again. "The letter," he said. "Ye'll mind that Ransome spoke like someone had tried before."

"And this Meers or Meyers rotter slugged his drink so that he could search his inside pockets for it. But why would anybody want the letter that bad?"

"Because," Davie put his finger on the spot so decisively that the breakfast teacups rattled, "the only secret about the thing was the exact location of yon tungsten find that Bellairs wrote to the Governor."

"By God, laddie!" Monty started up from his camp chair as though some immediate action could develop out of that. "You've got it!" He suddenly whooped and flung his hand to point his conviction. "And that proves once again that this Bellairs is not the Bellairs who wrote the letter."

"Aye, but then where is Bellairs that wrote the letter?"

"And who the devil is this mucker?"

"Aye," said Davie gloomily. "Two simple little things to prove and save our necks out of yon noose." He, too, got up and tramped a short beat back and forth, his hands hooked into the back of his belt, his body bent forward, brooding in dark perplexity, his thin whistling barely more than a hissing through tight lips.

Out of his contemplation his thoughts came in intermittent bursts, like deadly little bombs.

"Somewhere near the Ethiop border that's Italian territory. . . And no very clear line in yon jungles . . . Who has it holds it."

MONTY and Bubu followed his march with their eyes: they could follow the intricacies of his thought no better than of his meaningless whistlings. But the next bomb gave them a clue.

"A big blond Saxon man. Such as are allied with the Italians."

"You've got it, laddie!" Enlightenment tumbled over itself and made its own light for further clarification.

"There's the ruddy military 'ook-up!"

"And, by Jove, we have our own dashed nasty little experience to know the country stinks with their spies."

"Clever as 'ell too."

"So damned clever that they wouldn't miss even the little point of checking up on Bellairs' school."

They looked at Davie as though that knowledge solved their whole problem.

"We'll just show the blighted Jerry up."

"Aye," said Davie out of his dark mood. "As easily as belling the cat."

Their surge of uplift collapsed. Monty slumped back to his rickety camp chair; he sucked in his moustache, spat it from his lips, smoothed it to its neat points with his fingers, sucked it in again. Bubu let himself down cross-legged on the ground and swore his futility in explosive grunts.

The morning dragged on. The only relevant comment that came out of it was: "So the blond beast is taking Ransome on safari to indicate the place where the letter said."

" 'Ow about Ransome, dumb as 'e is, becoming suspicious why 'is fake engineer don't know the place and refusing to tell?"

"That won't bother the blond beast," said Monty grimly. "Get him out on safari and Ransome'll tell."

The only hopeful comment—an hour later—was: "Perhaps the dirty mongoose didn't die; they got more lives 'n a civet cat."

Monty and Davie didn't even look up.

The afternoon dragged on. Gog and Magog came back from their scout. Their report was as cheerless as doomsday.

"The man died. He had *wengo n'kubwa.*"

Wengo n'kubwa meant enlarged spleen. Many a promising young colonial's career had been wrecked on that tropic weakness. Let a man knock another down in hot-headed argument, and if the other's spleen were affected, it could rupture through no worse a shock than the fall; nor could anything be done about it. A few gasps and the man would be dead. Many a master had slapped an impertinent servant over the ear—and found himself a murderer.

And jittery colonial policy, in these days of a native press and enemy-inspired sedition rife in the land, dared not be lenient. A mere charge of homicide was a triumph for the defense.

Monty offered the meager comfort to Davie: "You see, laddie, it could have happened to anybody." And the gallant artifice: "I managed to knee the rotter a couple of times in the belly myself."

"What the 'ell's it matter who done it?" Bubu knew how the charge would go—"Homicide while in commission of a felony."

"All the *policea,*" said Gog and Magog, "and all the native constabulary have been notified by the wire talk to be on the lookout. The Governor Bwana is very angry."

"Yes-s-s!" It hissed from Monty bitterly. *"Lèse-majesté."*

"And their story as solid as a bloomin' rock." Bubu kicked little chinks of sod loose with his toe and cursed each divot with morose monotony. "Not a blinkin' pin 'ole in it, except we could catch that big devil and make 'im confess." Suddenly a mad light flared wide from his round eyes. "Couldn't we kidnap the swine?"

Even Davie's cautiousness took a spark from that hot, desperate thought. He looked to Monty for confirmation.

Monty sucked in his moustache. Then he threw out his hands in weary helplessness. "With all the coppers in Nairobi waiting for us? It would take an army."

Bubu dully made to climb into the truck. "Anyway, it'll take a blarsted army to comb this scrub. C'mon, let's move well in. And if we got to in a pinch, I know ways that'll get us to Belgian territory."

DUSK again found the truck after it had weaved a way through a succession of apparently blank walls of scrub. Even Monty was confused.

"Dashed if I know where we are."

"Not so far from my old hidie-hole trading post. Turkana country to the west. Beniqwas north. Lake Rudolf in between."

"Rudolf again, eh? Seems like that damned tungsten thing is built into our horoscopes. Anyhow, both those tribes are listed as troublesome; won't pay hut tax and all that. Well," Monty contrived a dreary smile, "suits us."

"And the few natives that lives in the scrub is outcasts for tabu breaking. They won't even tell natives what 'appens. We can hide out 'ere for ten years."

"Lovely prospect, what?"

Monty flung himself to stretch wearily on the ground. Bubu hunkered down on his heels. Davie prowled, stopping to examine with minute aimlessness little insignificant growths on tree barks, insect whorls on leaves. All of them were too dejected to talk.

Gog and Magog stood waiting for orders. They got none. They withdrew a little distance and set about an unsavory business of skinning a fat bush lizard that they had killed en route. No calamity could dull their appetites.

Night swooped over the bush like some vast bird of prey that sent the daytime noises scurrying for shelter. The rank smell of a hyena drifted in on the immediate cool wind that was the signal for the sleeping bush to wake up and trill and squeak and gibber.

Davie still prowled. The Gaelic sorrow that is a ponderable emotion beyond alien understanding was heavy upon him. An impulse born of no direct volition of his own, an unexpressed need for solace, moved him towards the truck, to fumble in a dark corner for a short narrow box of mahogany with brass reinforced corners. He stood over it, brooding. Then he unlocked it with the slow tenderness of a woman who opens a jewel case to let the sight of her treasures assuage a grief. He took from it a thing of fluted tubes and silver and tartan ribbons.

The click of polished hard woods roused Monty from his gloom. He groaned.

"Good God! You didn't bring that thing?"

Davie said nothing. With meticulous care, he fitted tubes to sockets, moistened reeds with his tongue, built the thing together.

Monty moaned. "Oh I say! Really now, old fellow; not at a time like this."

Davie said nothing. With fearful deliberation he draped the thing over his left shoulder.

The hyena, brave in the camp's motionless silence, let go its raucous *whrooo-oo-eeh,* startlingly close.

Davie stood a portentous shape in the gloom, waiting for inspiration. Gog and Magog, faithful savages, hitched closer on knuckles and hams, like giant apes; their eyes rolled in appreciative expectation.

Monty shrank away. "The wages of sin! Bubu, we're in for it."

Bubu, having none of the strong prejudices implanted by an English public school, grunted only: "What's the bloomin' use? There's nothing can stop 'em when they get that way. And we're a couple 'undred miles from town; they won't 'ear 'im."

Davie still said nothing. His art was one that developed a complete imperviousness to insult.

The hyena snickered its maniac laugh from the outer scrub.

Inspiration came to Davie. He announced it.

"*Truaghd Dhonnachaid Bhain. The Lament o' Duncan Bain.*" He swelled his lungs with the sucking inhalation of a deep diver and shattered the night with sound.

Monty could just hear the hyena's startled yelp and the gallop of its feet. He shrieked a half hysterical appreciation and yelled to Bubu: "Did you hear that? Enough to frighten even the brute beasts."

Bubu only mutely shook his head.

DAVIE strode the precise, slow rhythm of the dirge back and forth in the restricted space allowed him by the crowding bush, oblivious of Monty's gestures of horror, of Bubu's slumped resignation, oblivious of everything but the ache in his soul that must find release.

The moon suddenly heaved out of its bed and sent long searchlight shafts through the tracery of trees to see what alien uproar shocked the rest of the jungle to silence.

Davie searched the lament to its innermost soul; he exhausted its every possibility of improvisation. Then he deliberately directed his march to pass close to Monty; he took his blow tube from his lips, left his instrument to squeal excruciatingly on a single note, and announced with the lofty solemnity of one conferring a favor: "Mac Crimmuin's Weeping!"

Monty was too weary and dejected even to get up and move away. He only covered his ears with his hands. Davie's thick fingers caressed the chanter to wail the high notes and the intricate doublings of the lower octave that gulped inextinguishable grief.

Gog and Magog were caught up in the primitive spell; they rose from their hunkers and swayed their bodies to the slow measured cadences. Their feet shuffled in tentative moves, till presently they were improvising a dance that had its own dark meaning for them.

A dim shadow drifted into a moon patch and stood; two others joined it, hesitant, half afraid. Bubu hurled himself to snatch a rifle from the truck. The shadows stood black in the shimmery moon patch. At the first sign of concealment Bubu stood ready to fire. The shadows stayed. Bubu squatted again. Two of the shadows, irresistibly impelled, joined Gog and Magog in perfect unison with their gyrations.

Africans don't have to learn to dance. Give them a definite rhythm and a certain monotony of sound, and they know out of their primitive senses what motions must go with those sounds. The shadows danced with Gog and Magog like a team.

At last, Davie's yearning for peace drew its sufficiency of comfort out of the sheer exercise of rhythm. He let go the pressure of his arm. The sudden silence was like a district stunned. Davie drew in a breath and said, "A-a-ah!" His craggy face was broken in a smile of one who has communed with higher things.

The gyrating shadows were caught unsupported by rhythm and noise, in poses that were suddenly grotesque. The strangers slunk back, abashed, to the bush fringe.

Monty took his hands from his ears. His face still twitched as in anticipation of a further blow. He said: "My sacred aunt! That was an ordeal."

Davie grinned diabolically upon him; his accent was thick with the memories of his instrument.

"Yer meesappreciation is but the teepical Saxon deeslike o' admitting the mony benefits gie'n ye by ither folks."

"Good God!" A spasm went through Monty. "Don't say a thing like that to a man in my weakened condition. You called the blond beast a Saxon."

"Aye," said Davie coolly. " 'Tis a kinship that has naething to do wi' us Scots."

Gog and Magog approached and covered their mouths with their hands. It was an eloquent sign meaning that what they felt was beyond their powers of speech.

A voice came from the outer circle. *"Hodi."*

Bubu had never taken his eyes off that bush fringe. He said: *"Karibi"* It was an abbreviation of the formula that gives invitation. "Come close and sit."

"Nimekaa kitako," the voice acknowledged it with the polite exaggeration prescribed by formality. "I am already seated." And a man came and squatted. The other two shadows came and squatted behind him.

White lords of the ruling clique would have remained, if not already seated in a civilized chair, superiorly standing. They would thus have impressed their proper dignity—and would have remained exaltedly aloof from the hidden undercurrent that is as much the soul of Africa, as the hidden scufflings of the lesser creatures beneath the bush tangle are the soul of the jungle.

Bubu squatted. Davie knew enough to squat beside him. Monty was already down. An eddy of wind brought a whiff of the man to Davie. He scuttled to move to a safer position. Bubu's years in the African bush had practically destroyed his sense of smell.

IN the strong moonlight, Davie could see the man festooned like a walking exhibit of gruesomeness with tiny rodent skulls, dried embryos, queer things sewn in bags—all the conglomerate filths of African superstition that a witch doctor finds as necessary, to impress his clients, as medals to a dictator.

The man's face, since he held his ascendancy by his wits rather than by terrorism, was as brightly alert as a monkey's. Just now the shrewdness of his eyes was a little clouded by an emo-

tion. He said: "That was a great music. I heard it afar and came."

"Wonderful chappies, these wizards," Monty murmured. "Travel forty miles in no time."

"I came to offer my small skills to the Bwana who single-handed can make a music that is as good as many war drums and whistles for the ghost dancing."

"Wonderful chappies," Monty repeated. "A perfect sense of description."

Davie was picking up enough of Swahili to pronounce in a broad Scots accent: "*Assanti, mchawi m'kubwa.* Thanks, O Great Wizard."

"Don't go spoofing 'im, Monty," Bubu warned quickly. " 'Ere's one of those queer somethings that get under the black man's skin that civilized blokes will never understand. But get one o' these wizards friendly, and 'e can dish out more dirt than a bloomin' police blotter."

Monty remained unappeased. "Certainly I understand. It would get under a steel plate, under the bark of trees. But if out of the evil we can get any good, go ahead, ask him whether he has any gossip about up Rudolf way; anything about Ransome."

To Bubu's quick questioning the wizard's face took on the blank expression of Africans who don't want to understand. He said: "Nay, Bwana, these are the doings of white men in which we do not mix."

"Does a witch doctor offer service and then take it back?" Bubu accused him.

"Nay, Bwana, I pay a service. There is a talk that four patrols of the *policea* are out looking for certain three white men. One by the Rungi water hole, and two on the Anson's Outpost trail, and one to the south of this place."

"Sure are 'ot-foot after us." But Bubu grinned a satisfaction. "Fooled 'em, striking north. Though I don't like this one to the south of us." Then he turned to the wizard again. "So much we could guess for ourselves, if not the exact places. But the talk is now about a Bwana Bellairs, a *kapitani wa madini.*"

The wizard scooped sand with his hand and ran it out in little patterns as a man doodles with a pencil when his mind debates an action. The three white men, squatting close, hung over his decision that was a torture to watch. In the broken moonlight and black shadow it looked like a conference of major demons with subordinate devils squatted on the outskirts.

At last the wizard said: "Bwana, this is a matter that deals with fierce men who kill without counting. Yet, if the great Bwana here will give a word that he will make his ghost music again, I will tell."

" 'E'll play, never fear," Bubu growled.

"It is a desperate price," said Monty, "but go ahead."

The wizard obliterated his doodles with a sweep of his hand.

"This is the talk about that matter. The talk said that there was such a man, a *wa madini* who searched the ground, it was thought, for gold. Whether he found gold is not known, but he sent a letter by runner."

Monty whooped. "That's the man we want. He's the proof that'll get us out of this mess. Find Bellairs and we're clear. Where, O Wizard, is this man to be found?"

"Other white men came," the wizard said. "From over the border of Ethiopia. They wore the uniforms of soldiers."

"Ha! What kind of uniforms? Foreign?"

"It is not known. Uniforms are a magic of the white men that we do not understand. The white men need them to turn ordinary men into warriors, fierce to kill without counting. It is known only that some were small dark men and two were big pale men. They came and seized the *wa madini* who had sent the runner."

"The devil they did! And they hold him a prisoner, I suppose, while the blond brute impersonates him," cried Monty.

"The talk is, Bwana, that those white men put the *wa madini* to the torture because they are enemies in war—they kill without counting—and the *wa madini* died." The wizard smoothed the sand over his tale. "And that is all the talk that I know about this matter."

CHAPTER V

BAD LUCK AND THE DEVIL

HIS silence left the others as stunned as had Davie's ghost music. Bubu looked at Monty and Monty at him and both at Davie. A conference of demons struck dumb by a happening shocking even for hell.

The wizard chose one of the many bones that hung about his person, drew a plug of wood from it, tapped snuff onto his thumbnail and sniffed it with callous satisfaction. He politely offered the container to the white men. He shrugged and carefully corked it again.

Monty's voice came out of the flat silence, harsh and very tired.

"So that leaves only the other Bellairs to catch and save our necks," and he added, "before the coppers catch us first."

"Yes." Bubu found a perverse satisfaction in rubbing the salt in. "Very fierce, who kills without counting, as clever as the devil, protected by all the coppers in the colony."

The wizard could not possibly have understood; his wizardry might possibly have reached into some little explored mental labyrinth. He said: "There is a *habari* that one of those men, is now on safari with important ones of the government from Nairobi. But this thing is not understood; for he who was an enemy is now a friend."

It was Davie who jumped to his feet and took the name of his Lord in vain.

"By God!" he said.

The others stared up at his outburst, their breath waiting tense for something that had eluded them.

"The laddie has something."

"Aye, but the obvious," Davie shouted. "If he's on the way here's our chance to catch him!"

The others whooped to their feet. The wizard remained squatted, staring straight in front of him at nothing.

"Kidnap the brute, by Jove!"

"And make 'im talk. Right in front of Ransome. Make 'im fess up."

"If we'd only know where to— O Wizard, is it known where the safari is?"

"It can be learned, Bwanas. Many things can be learned for a payment."

"What payment?"

The wizard only looked at Davie.

"He will pay. I promise he'll pay." It was Monty who pledged Davie's art. "Davie laddie, you'll play for him. You'll give him all he wants." But the ingrained horror was inextinguishable. "I mean, all he can stand."

"But," said the wizard, "for the learning I must go awhile apart."

With chilling deliberation the old man collected himself together; he scuffled in the moon-specked dirt to be sure that he was leaving no part of his festooned gim-crackery; he coughed; he took snuff. Finally he stalked away into the bush, clicking and rattling in the last retreat of a *danse macabre,* his satellites behind him.

"We've got him!"

"And 'e'll talk, by crummy! 'E'll open right out, I don't care how big and fierce 'e is."

"Let's hope so, by Jove. For that's our only chance. They couldn't make the real Bellairs talk, though the swine killed him."

Doubt gnawed again at soaring hope. Monty's moustache hissed between his lips, exploded softly out. Davie's thick fingers twined, the knuckles cracked like twigs.

" 'E'll talk. Those ruddy foreigners ain't got the guts of a British orficer." And Bubu ground out the savage promise: "There's African ways that'll double match anything they ever did to Bellairs."

Even Davie found no reproof for the grim implication. He prowled his heavy beat, exploring the littlest intricacies of the bold plan.

"Aye, if we can keep clear of the patrols."

"The wizard will get *habari* to locate them. Laddie, you'll have to play up to that wizard."

The other two joined Davie's restless prowl. They tramped back and forth, they kicked at debris.

"Where the devil is that wizard?"

"Gor' strewth! If it takes that long to get *habari,* 'arf a dozen patrols would round us up."

Monty ate moustache. Bubu cursed. Gog and Magog squatted and chewed with the slow complacency of cattle.

AT last the wizard clicked back through the scrub. With awful deliberation he took snuff. Then he announced: "The safari travels in the empty country between the Barazi water hole and the great Nanyari donga. It heads towards the corner of Lake Rudolf."

They never questioned the information; they had no time to ask how. They only reviewed its bearing on their case.

"Bloomin' rough going up there."

"Pretty dashed close to the Ethiop border."

"What the 'ell! So much the better. Sort o' no-man's-land since the war."

"That's right. Border outposts on both sides have been withdrawn to stronger concentrations. Laddie, I think our luck is breaking."

Bubu screwed up his eyes like an owl winking against a strong light.

"Nanyari donga cuts forty miles out of the Ethiop hills. I know just about where they'll have to turn its low end. C'mon, let's get moving. Any luck and we'll be waiting for 'em, come morning."

"We've got him." Monty slapped Davie on the back, and Bubu in most unlordly white man manner slapped the wizard. Gog and Magog, seeing action and confidence again, jumped to gather up camp gear, unquestioningly curled into their corner in the truck. Bubu roared the starter.

Davie, never too confident in luck asked: "We will be having enough petrol?"

"Two 'undred in reserve, chum. That's good trader rule. And if we 'ad'n't, I've got some laid by in my old hidie-hole. Whee-ee! Let's go."

The wizard clambered creakily at the rear. "I go too, is it not so? For the Bwana's word is that he will again make the ghost music."

"Laddie," said Monty, "You'll have to hoot it up to that wizard. Dashed if the chappie isn't as impervious as a Scotchman."

"Scot," Davie said seriously.

"Now look 'ere," Bubu said. " 'Ere's 'ow we'll do. We'll lay up the truck well back in the bush. We'll leave the two boys and the wizard; we won't want 'em. This's got to be quick and sudden and no excitement."

His own round face twitched with excitement.

"Aye," Davie said. His voice had the hoarse memory of that earlier horror. "We must very carefully have no excitement; no shooting; no too careless swinging of anybody's fist. We don't want another killing."

"No, we ce'tainly can't afford another killing," Monty said. He amended that through his teeth: "At all events not until we've got the blond brute in our hands and Ransome witness to his confession. Better shin a tree, Bubu, and let's be sure we won't miss 'em."

"Righto. Gimme a hoist, chum."

Bubu climbed a thin maggongo tree, his only caution that he might not be seen by any safari leader as alert as they all knew the pseudo Captain Bellairs to be. He dropped back, wiped off his hands with satisfaction.

"Spotted 'em all right. Regular small safari, like copper Forbes said; car and truck, 'eading for the donga wash-out. C'mon."

They gave quick orders to the camp boys. They were to stay with the truck. Not a move; not a breath. This was not going to be a fight. It was a sudden jump; a snatch and all over.

Ambush was the simplest matter; much more important was not to leave any betraying trail. "That sleek devil would spot a broken bush or a boot print as quick as a bloomin' *dondoro* antelope, which makes 'em some of the trickiest 'unting in Africa."

Bubu pronounced it, "ahntelope." To which Monty's soaring spirits suggested the quip: "Well, he jolly well cahn't elope from us this time."

Bubu could appreciate that with a haw-haw. But Davie remained darkly impervious to English wit.

MONTY deflated to the national blank incomprehension of any other thought process than its own.

"Well, dash it all, old man," he said,

in irritation, "you needn't go sweatin' little drops of gloom over the landscape. We're goin' to jolly well carry our bats this time, if you ask me."

"Aye," said Davie cheerlessly. "I suppose so."

Monty stopped in alarm. "Is anything wrong with our plans? Hang it, laddie, you're not going Scottishly fey on us, are you? Second sight or some such primitive business?"

Davie shook his head. "No, I can't see a thing wrong with anything." But his face still expressed a vague unrest.

"Well, dammitall then. One witch doctor in a party is anybody's enough."

"'E's scared." Bubu said cheerfully. "'E's afraid if 'e gets 'is 'ands on that devil again, this time 'e'll twist 'is neck instead of 'is arm. Let's get set now.

"All of us got it exact? Not till the car is right 'ere in the dip. It'll be in low. Close enough to bloomin' well touch it. We'll just jump. You'll clonk the phoney captain under 'is blarsted ear, chum. That's all you got to do and your 'ands likely plenty full at that. I'll take Ransome loving round the neck till we can talk 'im sense. If there's another valet, 'e's Monty's and Monty will order the niggers quiet."

"Sounds flawless," Monty agreed.

"Aye," said Davie. "If yon fierce captain lad is not too fast with a gun."

The crunch and rattle of cars on rough ground came louder, not quite in view yet from the ambuscading screen. The slow descent of the slope where the donga began to widen out into the plain, squealed against hot brakes; the uneven lurching across the donga's floor. The car nosed into view. It was in low gear. Captain Bellairs drove, lolling back at his ease. Suspicious of nothing.

And nothing happened.

Captain Bellairs, looking very smart and official in field uniform, conversed easily with Major Ransome. Not at all alert. In the rear seat sat a meek, barber-looking man.

Nobody moved.

The car was close enough almost to touch.

Nobody breathed.

For in the open truck behind it sat six native troopers of the East African Constabulary!

The cortege trundled across the donga bottom, slowly climbed the other bank, the troopers' rifle muzzles disappeared over the ragged horizon like tiny masts of a receding ship.

"Clever as a devil!" Monty let it go with a breath that must have held taut for ten minutes, and with the exhalation his whole frame sagged down to the low extreme of depression.

"It'll take a bloody army to get 'im." Bubu aimlessly swore, some of it aimed at Bellairs, some at the constabulary, some at Africa and its mishaps. There was no design nor method to his swearing. He just swore.

"Clever—as—a—devil!" Monty repeated it with slow bitter emphasis. "One murderous attempt at robbery having failed, the same criminals might try it again—so he applies for an official escort to help his plans along."

Davie shook himself, as though physically to shed the tension from him. "I'm thinking we maybe made a mistake. With just our two brawny lads Gog and Magog to help we might have jumped 'em at that."

"Not troopers, laddie," Monty said morosely. "If they'd been just armed camp boys, Gog and Magog would have piled in without a question. But the E.A.C. uniform has built up a prestige in Africa pretty near as good as the Mounties."

Davie laughed harshly. "'Tis a sorry truth that the uniform makes the man."

Crouched in the comfortless scrub of the ambuscade, the bitter review of past mishaps crowded in on him.

"I'm beginning to hate uniforms. All my troubles in this land have come of uniforms. Trappings of war they are, and I, as a man raised in the light o' peace, should never have had anything to do with them."

"Light of peace?" Monty snorted his cynical scorn for the whole impractical idea of peace as well as its application to Davie. "It was your good missionary father bought the bally things in the first place."

"Aye, he bought the discredited trappings o' generals and field marshals, all

In the open truck, sat six native troopers of the East African Constabulary!

bedizened and bedeviled wi' the proud finery of an arrogant people; defeated and discredited after the last war and sold by the car lot. He bought them to cover the nakedness o' savage men who would prize such fripperies. Aye, and I inherited them with all their load of sin."

"Laddie," Monty said hurriedly, "this is no time to go into another Gaelic depression. And 'load of sin' is pretty dashed antique thinking these days. Those uniforms are still going to be a jolly profitable trade item."

PROFIT was a wrong note to intrude. Davie sank but the deeper; even physically he relapsed to a sort of formless mass of a man struck down by the cruelest blow of all.

"Profit? Ha-ha! Hard knocks, more and browner than pennies, have been our profit. What happened to our peaceful trade goods? Enemy spies stole them to emblazon themselves out as high officers come to lead the downtrodden blackamoor to bloody rebellion, and a fine slimy trap as suspected renegades we were in for having imported the garments o' strife. Aye, and now it's uniforms again that frighten our good African lads from helping us." Davie's jeremiad, well started on its way, went on to embrace every phase of distinctive clothing. "Aye, and again, if ye will look to the beginnings, an old school tie is in a manner a uniform, and no other but that has most appropriately gotten our necks into its noose."

"Oh I say! Come now!" Monty huffily defended sacrosanct tradition. "The tie drew attention to the bounder and was the means of uncovering a dastardly spy plot against our country. Lucky, I'd call it."

"A fine luck." But Davie got up and shook himself again as though physically to shake an incubus from him. "That luck has done with us, I'm thinking, and has fastened to a better master as he went by. That ill phase is over and done with and I'm glad we're none the worse of it."

Monty's nerves were on the thin edge. "None the worse? Why, you—dashed if I don't think sometimes your head is as thick as your arm. There goes our one chance of clearing ourselves. Catch him and make him confess; get him out on safari, was our only hope. So he's come and he's gone. Passed under our noses. With an escort. Oh, damn his clever soul! And you say none the worse."

"Aye, it could have been worse." Davie's Gaelic sensitivity to intuition was lifting him out of the slough. "Somehow I had no very great hope for it. We planned too easy. And I'm fearing me we're not the folks to whom things come the easy way in Africa."

"Too easy?" Monty snorted. "Can you think of anything harder?"

"Aye, plenty." But intuition was on the rebound from bottom; it physically oozed from Davie's face in the form of tiny drops on the bridge of his long strong nose. It rode on a scrape of superstition so old as to have achieved the dignity of truth. "Bad luck travels wi' the de'il, and never a wee closer could that one have passed. That luck has jumped to him like a louse and is now his, and no worse could I wish him. From here we make us a new one. Ye'll note he's still on safari."

Monty stopped gnawing on his moustache. Bubu peered at Davie with the absorbed stare of an expectant owl.

"What d'you mean?"

"We must take after him." Davie's confidence was enormous. "We must watch; we must bide our time. Belike by night, somehow, a chance will come. 'Twill be the hard way; aye, and I fear me there will be fighting to it. But for us it will be the only way."

Bubu got up. "Damn if 'e ain't right, Monty. We ain't licked. Not by a bloomin Jerry, no time."

The single word jerked Monty out of his depression. "Jerry? By gad, no! Right ho for the truck of course." But he still grumbled. "What a bally old fraud this Scotty is. Pretendin' to be a wild Highland seer and regrettin' he'll have to fight to save his neck. Had me worried for a while."

"I'm worried at this minute," Davie said, "about maybe running into patrol while we follow."

"You do think of the damnedest cheerless things!"

"Strewth!" Bubu growled. "Let's get on to the truck. We got a job. A whole lapful of a job, and all of British Africa against us."

At the truck the witch doctor said: "A *habari* came about the soldiers, but the Bwanas had already gone. I would have come with the news, but these great men of little wit said the order was to sit silent."

"There's literal Africa for you."

The witch doctor said: "Will the Bwana *wa kinanda* now make a ghost music to invoke the spirits of good fortune?"

"*Wa kinanda,* ye gods! He calls him a musician. Not now, Wizard. We follow. Is there a *habari* about patrols?"

"There is none, Bwana."

"Well, hope to Jimmy you get one when we need it."

CHAPTER VI

THE ENEMY

THE tire tracks left the donga and turned on a long slant northeast.

"Back towards the Ethiop border," Bubu said. "Wonder what's in his crooked mind?"

"The ways o' the de'il are devious. Ye don't suppose he might be laying a false trail, or maybe leaving a scout to see if he is followed?"

"Too blinkin' confident, if you arsk me. Didn't 'ave a care on 'is soul—if 'e got any. But if there's anything wary in this country right now, it's me."

The tracks continued on their long slant through the no-man's-land, edging always towards the corner where Lake Rudolf thrust its long bight out of Ethiopia into British Kenya.

The truck followed. Miles behind, ten miles at least. The difficulty was not in picking out the trail; it was a matter of not suddenly overtaking it. Bubu stopped every now and then and got out to examine minute grains of sand, whether they still fell into the wheel ruts, to note how much dust had blown over them.

The wizard, whose premonitions might have been supposed to be some use, enjoyed his first ride in the jolting truck with the delight of a child on a straw ride, and was as useless—and as persistent.

"When will the Bwana *wa kinanda* make the ghost music?"

"Dash it all, Wizard. D'you want them to hear us coming? They may be no more than ten miles ahead," Monty protested.

It was when night came that the real difficulties began to mount up. The jarring noises of a truck could carry over alarming distances, and the others could be camped anywhere ahead.

"Nothing to do but camp," Bubu said, "and we'll 'ave to take up the trail afoot so we'll know where to follow after the night's dew."

"Aye, and our chance may come this very night." Davie's confidence still soared.

"Plenty chance," Bubu assured him grimly. "This is lion country and we can't afford to go shooting off any bloomin' guns. Though," his addition was an even grimmer note, "we'd damn well better take one."

But the luck that Davie's confidence expected held out. There were no lions. There was instead presently a fire glimmering through the brush; and presently, as they crawled nearer on their stomachs, it was a bonfire beyond need of any decent camp.

"They've certainly got nothing to hide," Monty sourly compared the camp's open cheer to their own cautious skulking.

They lay flat and watched. Cheerfulness and all the comforts of a well equipped safari were there. Hammock chairs, folding tables, chop boxes. The fire shone on the real glass of long drinks with swizzle sticks in them. The flap of a tent yawned a triangle of blackness in red, fire-lit canvas. The six troopers gave to the whole an assurance of official well-being and security.

Captain Bellairs, as debonair and smart an officer as ever graced a uniform, lounged and conversed in the utmost amity with Major Ransome who remained as innocent and unsuspicious

of intrigue as the most honest officer who ever gave away his country's secrets.

Bubu inched his rifle forward. "I could pick the blighter off from 'ere as clean as knockin' off apples."

Davie hurled himself upon Bubu.

"Man, ye wouldn't shoot him in cold blood!"

"Get off of me, you 'ulking great bullock. Why wouldn't I? Is 'e the only one got a right to play all out and no rules? 'E's a dirty Jerry spy, isn't 'e? And 'e's out to cop a military secret; and 'e's ready to 'ang the three of us and anyone else who'd interfere with copping it. Sure I'd bushwhack 'im out o' the dark and do my country a service—Only we got to get 'im alive and twist a confession out of 'im."

MONTY chuckled his cynicism at Davie's other side. "Inhibitions, laddie. I've told you they're a handicap in Africa. Look at the blond beast. He has none and he holds the lead and all trumps." And Monty intruded a diabolical question to plague righteousness: "We know the man to be an enemy spy; but we can't prove it to stop the dirty work. As patriots we ought to shoot him out of hand and let ourselves hang—Hand him the rifle, Bubu."

He left Davie to fumble with his conscience; he had more important questions to consider.

"Though I'm dashed if I can see how he proposes to make Ransome show him the place. There'll have to come a time presently when he'll have to ask, which way? And even Ransome isn't such a fool as not to suspect them."

"The mucker is 'oping like enough to steal that letter yet."

"The way Ransome spoke, that letter is in a safe place and the information in his head. Yet how is he going to compel Ransome to talk while there's an escort of six men?"

Davie had to give up trying to make conscience coincide with military expediency. He asked: "Just how important might a tungsten deposit be?"

"How important? Laddie, it's one of the major raw material deficiencies for the hardening of steel," Monty explained.

Davie scowled at the big fire as intently as the other two. All he could think was: "'Twill then be some dark and de'ilish devious plan yon cateran will have."

"Something so damned crooked," Monty agreed mirthlessly, "that even traders can't think of it."

"Aye, and he sitting yonder so no-caring because he knows it can't fail. What think you now of a raid in the dark? Haply while the escort may be asleep."

"Madness. And the escort won't sleep. Confident the devil is, but he's as clever as a devil; he'll jolly well see to it that they post sentries." And Monty cursed his own inhibitions that he so cynically advised Davie to discard.

"Dammit, if we could only bushwack 'em out of the dark and even things up a bit!"

"Aye." Davie was so far persuaded by the cold logic of Monty's plaint that his conscience permitted him to agree. "'Tis a peety almost we can't do just that. But," the confidence that was carrying him on its wave forced the assurance, "our chance will yet come. Or," he amended that through hard-bitten teeth, "if it doesn't we'll e'en have to make it."

"Jolly well right we'll have to make it," Monty put in the grim reminder. "Or we'll swing."

Dark and devious, Davie had prognosticated the spy's plan. But it turned out to be neither dark nor devious, though devilish enough.

In the broad light of tomorrow's day it happened and it was so simple that it had the mark of genius—certainly of genius for careful planning.

The trail led through the no-man's-land a scant ten miles from the Ethiopian border. The truck followed as warily as before. Suddenly the wizard, crouched in the rear in his blanket, remarked out of a blank contemplation of nothing: "The safari has stopped."

Bubu's foot jammed down on the brake as much from his start of surprise as of his conscious volition.

"'Ow d'you know that?" He jumped from the truck and pored over the

tracks; he took the field glasses and explored the broken hill country ahead for smoke, searched the sky for tell-tale birds.

" 'Ow the blinkin' 'ell d'you know?"

The wizard only looked at him as blankly as ever his own owl eyes had discomfited a questioner. He pointed with his chin. "From the brow of that hill it will be seen."

Bubu scanned the scenery again, rebellious to admit that he saw nothing. But his long experience of Africa knew the futility of trying to force an admission that a black man didn't want to give or the hopelessness of trying to understand what was beyond a white man's understanding.

"Better let's scout ahead and take a look-see. Like enough 'e spotted some sign that's beyond me— All right, you boys, you wait. You'll be able to see us on that hill. If we signal bring the truck up fast."

THE three went ahead on foot. The hill was a typical rounded sugar loaf, a vast, cobble, rather, rolled out from the foot of the farther slopes. A couple of miles away, as they approached it, its fuzzy sides resolved to low clumps of gorse shrub that offered perfect concealment.

They reached its top, cautiously wormed over the brow—and there, sure enough, the safari was. Car and truck halted in the little valley below, barely half a mile away.

If the following truck had kept going it would have taken the obvious route around the base of the sugar loaf and would surely have been discovered.

"Clever devil!" It burst from Monty again. "Wonder what he suspected?"

But "Captain" Bellairs, clever as the devil, had suspected nothing. He had expected something, and here, perfectly planned, it came.

A tongue of jungle growth followed the ravine that splayed out from the Ethiopian hills. Out of it came men. White men. Some dozen or fifteen of them. They marched with neat military precision.

"Give me those—" Monty snatched the prism glasses from their case that swung at Bubu's shoulder. He focused them.

"Good God!" and unconsciously he repeated a description that the wizard had given when he spoke of local gossip. "Small dark men! And one big pale man! Dammit they're—" His voice was choked down to a dry rasp by the sudden spectacle of something that he knew to exist but that had somehow seemed remote. "They're the enemy!"

The men marched forward out of the jungle. Captain Bellairs waved his arm; his shout came faintly on the wind. Major Ransome seemed to be upset. He talked to Bellairs, gesticulating. Bellairs stood as coldly calm as a stone graveyard statue. Ransome started to move away. Bellairs reached a hand to his upper arm. Ransome tugged at it. Bellairs remained as solidly unmoved as a statue. Ransome shouted to the escort. Bellairs' voice cracked out above his with the whip of authority. The escort looked from one officer to the other, fumbled, fiddled, did nothing.

The watchers on the hill could see it all as in an old-time pre-sound horror movie, flickering across the heat shimmer that rose from the plain. They could hear no words, only the overtones of an occasional shout.

The men from the jungle, still with neat precision, surrounded the safari. Bellairs clicked his heels with neat precision and saluted the big pale man. The big pale man saluted him and slapped him most heartily on the back. Bellairs politely saluted some of the small dark men. They politely saluted him. There was a great ceremony of formal saluting all around and a lot of congratulatory hand-shaking.

Nobody saluted Ransome in his uniform of a major. But they did quite politely take him in charge.

The escort, bewildered by the cordial reception of at least one of their officers, surrounded, gave up their rifles.

All of it so simple. So precisely planned. So damnably clever.

The three watchers could only gape at each other. They could do nothing more about it than about a particularly nasty movie drama.

"Well, I'll be—" was the only and utterly futile comment that came from any one of them.

The two big pale men and the more important looking of the small dark men got into the car; the car proceeded unhurriedly towards the Ethiopan border. Ransome was relegated to the truck with the rest of the small dark men.

The truck would have been quite crowded with its original six troopers of the escort. The troopers were unloaded over the farther side of it. There came a little flurry of tiny pops. The truck drove on after the car. Six little khaki dolls sprawled half hidden in the tall grass.

DAVIE heaved himself to his feet. An incoherent noise that could have been nothing but profanity was in his throat. Monty and Bubu hurled themselves upon him before he was well up, tripped him; they rolled with him, fighting to keep him down. All that they could do was for both of them to throw their arms about his legs and hold desperately on, so that he could do no better than sit up, and the gorse scrub, then, was high enough to hide his head.

"You blasted fool!" Bubu panted. "What d'you think we can do? We could do nothing against those six poor devils, and now there's a baker's dozen o' first class devils."

"And they kill without counting." Monty repeated it like a slogan well and proudly earned. "No use going off the deep end, laddie."

Davie sat still perforce, both of them over his legs. All three looked after the receding caravan, headed for Ethiopia. They stared in sick silence till it wound slowly out of sight.

Monty said out of a new dejection: "Thought you said our luck would change."

"It has." Davie clung doggedly to his ancient superstition. "At all events there's Ransome knows the truth now."

"Lot of good that'll do us. They've got Ransome, and their kind of efficiency doesn't let a life hamper them."

"Aye, but they will not let a man die before they get his information."

"Before they get—" A shiver went through Monty at the implication of that. "Good Lord, I'm sorry for Ransome. The blond beast would twist the secret out of a stone."

"Ransome won't stick it out any too long." Bubu had that much of meager comfort. "'E'll talk at the first twist, I'll wager."

"Well, then, there it is." Davie tugged at his feet. "Let me up, ye *muckle brathraicheann.* I'll be good. There's a beginning of our new luck. Ransome will be a lot easier to kidnap, and himself willing."

"True enough, laddie. But—" Monty's extraordinary criticism grew out of one of those ineradicable loyalties that make for a country's greatness. "If we can't jolly well have him out of their clutches before they torture the information out of him, all that we save is our own necks."

"Gor! Listen at 'im. Our necks is enough to save out o' this kind o' blinkin' fix, if you ask me."

"The more reason that the twain o' you gillies get quickly off my legs and let us get to the following before they come into Ethiopia that's enemy country."

But that was more than Davie's new luck could deliver so soon after its enlistment to the party. The stolen safari wound leisurely across the border and well into Ethiopian territory and there it came to a base camp that had evidently been the starting point for the bold raid.

The truck followed the trail and just as boldly pushed on into enemy territory. "It's a bloomin' no-man's-land," Bubu said, "just as much as our side is. Only difference is the patrols we got to dodge are ruddy foreigners. And," his British conviction of superiority grunted from him, "that ain't turning my hair gray."

SPYING with the caution of Indians again, the three saw a comfortable camp in a valley. There were tents, semi-permanent cooking shelters, many sullen servants of the conquered black race. Ransome, hands tied, was leashed

as carelessly as a dog to the truck. The captors were in no hurry. Everything had come exactly as they had efficiently planned it.

"Clever devils." Monty had to give them that unwilling credit again. "Must have been watching engineer Bellairs for a long time."

A thought came to Davie. "If yon tungsten deposit is on our side, how would the enemy profit by it?"

"Nothing to prevent them sending a force and just grabbing a few miles of borderline territory. Take us an expeditionary force to turn 'em out. And for that matter, if they could just prevent us from finding it, it would be a jolly feather in their military cap."

"Then," the logical sequence formed its merciless picture in Davie's mind, "Ransome's life is not so necessary to them. Aye, not nearly so necessary as it is to us. Whatever rescuing we do, we must get to it fast."

Bubu left off his sullen swearing for long enough to grunt his standard, but very practical objection. "Look at 'em. It'd take a bloomin' army."

Davie scowled at the camp. He couldn't walk about to stimulate thought. But he hissed, as he lay on his stomach, his tuneless rhythms. Till one suddenly jerked to a squeak of finale on a high note. Davie held his breath on it; his head cocked as though listening for inspiration, and then he announced with conviction: "We've got an army."

" 'Is Majesty's African Rifles, I suppose. Just call 'em up."

"Shut up, Bubu. Scotty is fey on us again. He's had an idea or two before. Pretty mad, but at least a thought. I haven't a foggiest myself. What army, laddie?"

"Chief Dembo."

"Dembo? It's fou you are, you chump, not fey. The last dealing we had with Dembo, he raided us and looted our camp of just those uniforms to sell to the foreign fifth column agents."

"Aye, but we came back and left him a fine kick in his leopard skin kilt to teach him a lesson. Yon blackamoor chief is our man. Turkana country borders on Rudolf that we're in the corner of now and he is one o' yon turbulent folk. We can reach to him by this same night." Davie spoke fast and, as always when carried away by enthusiasm, the accent of his upbringing crept in on him.

"Conseeder the man. Mission raised, therefore having no respect for white men as such. Educated, therefore no stupid and honest savage. Able to read all the sedeetious pamphlets about Africa for the Africans, therefore having never a loyalty to any side but his own color. A fine brawny rogue is our Chief Dembo."

"A perfect summing up of mission education for the black brother, old chap. But so what?"

"So Chief Dembo sold out to the enemy to raid us." Davie began to scrabble out backwards from his hiding so that he could let his limbs swing to action. "He will just as readily, show him but a loot, sell out to us to raid the enemy."

"The damnedest ideas you get, laddie; and this is as mad as any yet. But—" Monty sucked his moustache, puffed it out. A grim smile grew with the assimilation of the idea. "By God, it would be a turn of the dirty table! It would be a hoist of the slimy enemy with his own petard! Bubu, can we make it from here? Are there any trails?"

"We'll make it, by strewth," Bubu said, "if I 'ave to jump the truck over every donga."

CHAPTER VII

WAR DANCE

THE truck's passage over uncharted wasteland was a miracle of bush driving. Bubu's sixth sense might have been a spotter plane, soaring high and signaling back where to avoid deep cut dongas, how to dodge impassable *cul-de-sacs* of jungle.

Spirits soared as high. The idea was practical; it could be done. Chief Dembo was a rogue from whom the imperialist theory of white man prestige had been preached out and replaced by the Christian theory of brotherhood of

man; he was educated beyond primitive honesty and up to cunning and beyond cunning to the supreme effrontery of calling himself a patriot.

There were plenty of surreptitious pamphlets to tell him so. Slogans of freedom were in the air. "Poland for the Poles. Finland for the Finns. Self-determination." All of the lofty altruism the pamphlets diabolically pointed out, loudly promulgated by the people who prated of fighting the battle for liberty.

Why not then, "Africa for the Africans?" And Chief Dembo was well enough educated to grin with big white teeth and ask with African humor: "Or is dem good Christian things only for white skin?"

He asked it without rancor. It was a law of all nature that whatever could grab it, had it; and he found no fault with so sensible a law. Chief Dembo was ripe for such a proposition.

A witch doctor could enormously help. Monty crouched in the truck and bargained in jerky gasps as the truck lurched on its career. The witch doctor remained on his single track.

"But the *wakinanda* must make the ghost music."

"He will." Monty conceded it desperately. "But now we consider a matter of a magic to bless this raid—"

Spirits soared and the three shouted as they rode. They shouted as the truck careened into Chief Dembo's village, swaying high wheeled over the piles of refuse that littered its mud street.

Tall, naked men appeared at the doorways of bamboo huts, spear-armed, belligerent. Pendulous-breasted women and pot-bellied brats scattered squealing like the pigs that ran with them.

The chief's hut was a sway-backed sow of adobe and thatch shed with a litter of women's sties clustered at its flanks. For it is a credit to Africa that the educated black brother returning home never high-hats the old folks but gratefully accepts with them the comfortable insanitation of his heritage.

Chief Dembo appeared at his door dressed in the leopard skin kilt and patent leather shoes. An immense man, burly and not as fat about the middle as an African chief has a right to be. Spearmen were clustering at his bamboo fence, yet Dembo's yellowish eyeballs rolled just now a little apprehensively at the three white men.

He said: "What you fellas want by my place? You got no fight with me. Dem business all finished."

"All finished and no 'ard feelings, Dembo." Bubu climbed stiffly from the driving seat. The others followed. Dembo's eyes rolled on Gog and Magog. Those brawny scamps, Turkanas themselves, had deserted his following for a better master. Dembo scowled upon them and repeated an old promise.

"Some time I catch dem fellas, dey be sorry."

Gog and Magog grinned at him. The wizard crawled from the truck like an ape. Dembo showed more respect than ever to a white man.

"*Jambo, M'chawi. Karib.*" He clapped his great hands. "Let beer be brought and stools." He was still suspicious of the white men. "So you come to make friends, hum?"

"To make a business with you, Dembo."

Dembo grinned. He had the admirable African trait of possessing no personal honor to rankle over a blow. He said: "With me? Ho! Last time I got a business against you dem Scottee fella kick me like a buffalo. Some day, you Scottee, you fight me spear and shield, hum? I bet you." He was extraordinarily unhostile about it, and very shrewd.

"You got a business to make? You got some trouble with dem polis fellas again, so you come here, hum?"

"Plenty of trouble." Bubu told him the story; told him all of it, truthfully, in detail.

DEMBO frowned doubtfully. "Soldier fellas, hum? That is bad." He turned to the witch doctor. "What do you say, Wizard?"

The wizard said just as shrewdly: "A good magic might be made."

Dembo grunted, "Ho!" and scowled. Then, "What I get out of all this?"

Monty took a hand. "Look, Dembo.

There's a car that belongs to the government. Nobody will know what becomes of it in the scramble. We give it to you. There's a truckful of lovely things. We give you that too. I bet they've got peaches in cans, the bally sybarites. There's cook pots, camp furniture, tables, chairs—sleek hammock chairs, Dembo, where your fat wives can wallow naked like in a bathtub."

Dembo's yellow eyes rolled. His big lips smacked over the taste of such a loot. But his scowl remained.

"How many dem soldier fellas?"

"About fifteen all told, officers and men."

Dembo's scowl became ferocious to cover disappointment that was a physical hurt. He shook his head like an angry bull and scattered soaring hopes as though the bull charged right through them.

"My men no can do. Dem soldier fellas too bad."

"But damn it all, Dembo." Monty tried frantically to argue against African stupidity. "Your gang wasn't scared to raid us."

"You fellas be just white man; dem soldier fellas be fighting man."

"But—Lord help us—a soldier's no different from a civilian. All he has is different clothes—and they're all bloody foreigners over there anyhow; they can't fight."

Dembo still shook his head, rumbling at his own helplessness.

"What use you tell me? I know; I got education advantages. But my men is poor black fellas with experience of lose the fight all the time. They know soldiers is bad fellas."

Dembo in his crude words had his finger right on the great truth that kept an inchoate continent under subjection to a handful of whites who knew the secret of organization.

Monty slumped, the enthusiasm of his argument bogged deep in the mud wall of obtuseness that could not distinguish between the power of disciplined men and the insignia that designated them as such.

At that moment Davie endangered his soul with profanity. He let it go right out loud. "The guid Lorrd damn them! Uniforms again! The curse of them is upon us and not a thing we can do—" He stopped suddenly. Shock at his own impiousness was in his face and a dawning wonder. "The Lorrd forgive me," he said. "Aye, but there is something."

He jumped to Dembo and pounded a finger on the wide naked chest. His words came in a surge of eagerness.

"Man Dembo, ye're right. Your men are right. 'Tis uniforms that make the man, as all the stupid peasantry o' Europe well knows. 'Tis fine braw laddies that ye have here. Give them but uniforms and they'll be soldiers. Is it not so?"

Bubu and Monty gaped at him as wonderingly as did Chief Dembo.

"Blimey if Scotty 'asn't gone puff!"

Dembo backed away under the crowbar pounding of Davie's finger. But its insistence demanded response. He mumbled: "You bet you I got fine men fellas; good for soldier any time they get soldier clothes."

Davie's voice fell to portentous gravity; the final pound of his thick finger rocked Dembo backwards.

"We-ell, we've got 'em! Uniforms! Generals, we'll make o' your lads, Chief. Brigadiers! Field marshals!" His voice rose with each advance in grade to the ring of trumpets. "All the meelitary genius o' Europe we can supply. Fifty of 'em at least; all packed and safe in Bubu's hidie-hole station not so far from here. And 'tis yourself that has seen a sample as fine as a peacock in its glory and raided our camp to steal them for a renegade loon that offered ye a loot not a tenth as good as yon peetiful foreign camp across the border."

BUBU yelled a "Whee-ee!" and jumped without any further question for the truck. Gears crashed; it roared off, bucketing and skidding amongst the refuse heaps. Monty, incurably suppressed, controlled any urge to undignified emotion, but he came and put his arm across Davie's shoulder.

"The damnedest ideas, laddie. And this time dashed if I don't think you've popped it right on the shiny spot." And

he added to it. "Shows the value of a little sound cursing, what?"

Chief Dembo's civilization had spoiled nothing of honest African demonstrativeness. He jumped high, arms and legs flung to the air, his head thrown back and his eyes rolled entirely into it. All the ecstasy of a civilized jitterbug was his.

His great cavern of a mouth let out a roar. "You give me dem uniforms for my men? By damn, I loot dem foreign fella camp clean as army ants!"

A sadness overlaid Davie's enthusiasm. "We-ell, now." His fingers tugged at his chin. "They represented the profit end o' our trading beesiness. But—we-ell, I suppose in the caircumstances—"

Monty's arm fell away from Davie's shoulder. "My sacred aunt! The man can think of business and profits at a time like this! Of course we give 'em to you, Dembo. Deck out your gang in 'em, as many as we can fit, and whoop up the old battle cry. Business? Dash it all! When our necks are at stake?"

"Aye." Davie accepted the loss and, having accepted, made the philosophic best of it. "And pairhaps more important, as ye said, is yon meelitary secret to be saved. Though I misdoot the admeenistration will ever pay us as much as our gasoline expenses for it."

Monty shook his head in despair over a character so utterly at variance with his standard. "Hanged if anybody can understand a Scotchman—I mean, a Scot." But his hand went back to Davie's shoulder. He chuckled in grim humor; he looked at Davie hesitantly.

"Laddie, I don't know whether you'll see the joke of this. To hire their own strong-arm gang against them is a neat enough turning of the tables. But dwell a while on the sheer heavenly justice of using the uniforms that they hoped to use to incite rebellion against us, as the very means of inciting a raid against them in their, er—if you know what I mean, old man, what?"

Monty's concept of the joke was as involved as one of the pages of *Punch*, but Davie could see it. He grinned broad appreciation. Monty was delighted.

"If you can see it, it must be good. Hoisting Jerry with his own dud, eh? One of your sheerest inspirations, old chap."

Both men shouted their laughter and clapped each other on the back over so grimly sardonic a twist of circumstances. And then suddenly Monty caught at Davie's arm, a horror in his eyes.

"Transport!" The one word exploded as though the despised dud turned out to be a shell. "We've got our army but how will we get it there in time?"

"The de'il!" said Davie. "The verra de'il an' a'!"

We could get about twenty into the truck—if they all stood up and we made a bale of 'em with a rope. But just uniforms won't give 'em that much courage; we'll have to have twice that number."

DAVIE, riding the wave of his new luck, was surging with the quick thoughts that follow in the train of confidence.

"Well, now, let me think— Wasn't there another trader man who had a station not so far from Bubu's?"

"Biashara Mason!" Monty shouted it. "And he has a trade truck. But we left him in Nairobi, and his truck will be locked in his shed with native boys in charge."

"We'll raid them and we'll steal it," Davie cried.

"Stout fellow!" Monty exulted. "The old righteousness is slipping, what? Nothing can stop us now."

They shouted together and pounded each other on the back again.

"The witch doctor!" Monty thought. "What can we give him to pull a good augury for this thing?"

"Promise him the earth," Davie said. "We'll make good on it somehow."

Both of them were drunk with the high exaltation of bold plans clicking through, doggedly shoved over all obstructions and pointing to their sure goal.

The truck lurched in out of the quick growing dusk. Bubu threw out neat packages of tar paper. Dark forms clustered behind Chief Dembo to pounce upon them like leopards onto meat.

"Pick your toughest men, Dembo," Monty warned. "We want no tailor's dummies."

Dembo shouted to men by name. Burly fellows stepped out of the fire shadows.

Monty turned a package to the nearest fire to read its penciled label.

"Captain, Fourth Uhlans. Who gets this, Dembo?"

"Moshi be captain. *Ewe,* Moshi! *pokea huyu.*"

Moshi fell upon his package with fingers like claws.

"Field Artillery. Lieutenant."

"Mpendu not so big fella; he be good for left'nant."

"Artillery again. Colonel." Monty doled them out. Dembo called his proper henchmen; he graded them on the basis of size to appropriate rank.

"Whee! Here's a general. Who's good for a general, Dembo?"

Dembo let go a shout. "Dat's me, Mista Montee. I be fit for general."

"Hell, no, Dembo. We'll make you a division commander at least."

Monty doled the gorgeous things out and Dembo apportioned them. Blue and silver, gray and gold. Splendors of military sartorial conceit. Dreadfully wrinkled, tarnished from twenty years of storage, but sheer glory to Dembo's naked fighting men.

They had to put them on at once, of course. They didn't know how; buttons, frogs, points-pendant, remained a mystery to them; dainty shoulder cloaks became kilts for wide black buttocks; sabre-taches made glistening breastplates. Medals and hangings of high command winked red in the firelight.

IT WAS a fantastic scene out of a storybook. Great black men posturing in the obscurity, decked out in all the panoply of Europe's pride—and all of them yelled their exaltation.

Davie barked a laugh as sardonic as ever any of Monty's.

"Aye, if some o' yon meelitary geniuses would but see the emotional effect o' their proud garments now."

"Sort of an eye-opener, what?"

Chief Dembo's brawny limbs were bursting from the clothes of an Austrian field marshal. He loomed gigantically black against its soft dove gray. He said: "Dem wizard fella say he need help. He say you Scottee understand dem witch business."

"Oho! A kindred spirit, laddie. He detects in you the psychic Gael. Let's go see what he wants."

The wizard crouched within the door of Dembo's hut, lit by Dembo's very modern kerosene oil lamp. In the threshold dust lay an involved pattern of colored beans and finger bones and gruesomely suggestive little shapes sewn in translucent skin of unborn embryos.

He said: "I have cast the secret things and the omens are good. I have made all the magic that I know for this great deed that is to be done. There remains yet the magic of the ghost music to call the spirits of good luck."

"Oh-oh!" Monty's face was resigned. "Single track blighter, isn't he? I felt we couldn't postpone it for much longer. All right, Scotty. Play him what you owe. I can stand it."

Davie was willing enough. "All too willing," Monty said. Stepping softly, squinting far away to find the exactly appropriate tune, Davie took out his instrument. He draped himself with it and seemed suddenly to tower in majestic dignity above Monty.

Maliciously he grinned at him and announced: "*The Hundred Pipers!* 'Tis a commemoration o' the time we chased the Sassenach out o' Carlyle."

"Good God, no!" said Monty. "Nothing so horrid ever happened."

"Aye, but we did too. Chased 'em bleating into the woods."

"I mean, not a hundred! Not all at once! Dash it all, even Jerry wouldn't do a thing like that. What I mean to say, man's inhumanity to—"

Davie blasted speech from him. He strutted to the lilt of the thing. The black men, after their first gasp of surprise, yelled applause. They clustered around, bulking enormous out of the gloom. They got in the way, scattered at the last moment like oxen before the approaching roar of a car, re-formed behind. With the same instinct that impels an ape to copy and outdo, they

tried to outyell Davie's terrific blast.

The martial swing of the tune began to catch their pulses.

Wi' a hun-n-n-dred pipers an' a' an' a',
We'll up an' we'll gie 'em a blaw a blaw
Wi' a hun-n-n-dred pipers an' a, O-ho!

They could war dance to that. Without command or direction a snake of men began to form of itself. Somebody got a drum; he couldn't help it, he had to. Yells greeted him. More drums came. With perfect sense of timing they felt their way into the beat.

Davie strutted. The drums roared. Monstrous black forms, grotesque as a general staff, loomed amongst the red fires; they beat their breasts and howled with joy.

Monty cupped his hands to Bubu's ear. "How long d'you think they'll keep it up?"

He turned his ear to Bubu's cupped hands.

"Them Africans'll keep up a jamboree as good as this one all night; and Scotty is a bloomin' power blower when 'e gets going."

"What about tomorrow?"

"Swipe Biashara's truck and carry two loads."

"Forty men? Hope it'll be enough."

"Gor' strewth! Look at 'em! Bloody awful racket, but it sort of gets you. They'll fight."

"Huh! Think we can get any sleep?"

"No. But let's try."

CHAPTER VIII

SNAKE TRAP

TWO trucks, a literal bale of men in each, roped and reroped to a solid and, in their fine raiment, appallingly sweaty mass, jounced through the African scrub under the African sun. Yet, there being a following wind, the white men who drove suffered more than did the Africans. Neither black men nor white minded the discomfort.

"Traveled worse in a forty-and-eight," Monty said.

There was no particular hurry. This would be a night raid, for a cautious thought had come to Davie.

"Ye don't suppose that folks as efficient as they would be prowling the border without a machine gun?"

A good five miles from the enemy camp, Bubu stopped. "A little efficiency won't 'urt us," he said. "Take no chance of anybody spotting a truck. We can walk. Dembo, can you keep your wild-eyed men from rushing that camp before we get organized?"

"By golly," Dembo cried, "any fella go for dem loot before me, I spear him."

In the same woodsy concealment from where they had watched the camp before, the expeditionary force lay and waited for the last of the sun.

"Look at that! The swine!" Bubu exploded in a fury of disgust. "If it wouldn't warn 'em for defense, so 'elp me Gawd I'd bushwack 'em right now."

The others understood without asking. They could see Ransome. He appeared to be tethered still to the truck like a dog, slumped against a wheel. Bubu got the glasses to bear on him.

" 'E's alive—I think. But 'e looks beat up bad."

"With the help o' the good Lorrd we'll rescue him yet."

"With the help," Monty amended cynically, "of a gang of big buck savages who have guts enough to die for a chance of some loot. Now let's arrange exactly how we're going to do this. It'll have to be a surprise before they can get to that machine gun or they'll cut us in halves."

"Aye, and we'll have to allow yon beastie credit for posting sentries."

And as the tall trees of that jungle glade began to shut out the last of the light, that was exactly what happened. Not the blond beast; he was taking his ease chatting with the other big blond man. One of the small dark men with military efficiency mustered a guard and marched them out with all the fussiness of a parade ground; he posted them at various points along the jungle edge.

"Aa-ah!" It breathed windily from Monty. "I think we've got 'em. With any luck, my lads, we've got 'em."

"What way are you thinking we've got 'em?"

"Wait till I'm more sure. Watch those tents."

There were three tents. For in military affairs caste has to be observed, and even in military alliances there remain supercilious distinctions.

Night came down like a blanket. Lanterns appeared in the cozy camp. The two big blond men retired into one tent; their lantern shone filmy through a mosquito net that barred the opening.

"Damned sybarites!" Monty grunted.

Some of the small dark men went into another tent; others, the greater number, crowded into the third. Natives, of course, slept in the open with the mosquitoes. So did Ransome, tethered to his wheel.

"Aa-ah! We've got 'em sure."

"What way?"

Monty let his hand rest on Davie's shoulder; it shook with the excitement that raced through him. "Those tents, laddie, are snake traps. We'll take 'em most appropriately; same as the Hottentots catch pythons for food. Dembo, come here. If we do this right we'll save lives—"

THE sentry who stood by the big ceiba tree jumped like a wakened monkey as Dembo's burly form bulked up beside him. He let out a squawk. Dembo clapped a hand over the fellow's mouth, whispered fiercely in his ear.

A voice called from one of the tents.

"What happens?"

Dembo's voice answered. "It is but some wild beast, Bwana. I shouted to frighten it."

The sentry gawped at Dembo's fantastic loom in the outer edge of the camp's lantern flicker; the slow machinery of his mind took its time to assimilate the portent. Dembo whispered fast; black man to black man. He removed his hand from the sentry's mouth. The sentry made no outcry.

The next sentry edged over. The three forms merged. Dembo whispered.

Militarily efficient the conquerers were. They knew all the rules. They followed them according to the book. There was only one rule that their book didn't know—the simple rule of human nature. Their military arrogance never seemed to understand that their kind of efficiency, that so quickly broke men to harness, did not breed loyalty.

So black Chief Dembo whispered and black sentries listened. One of the sentries went warily to the next one and whispered. On then to the next. Other black forms began to loom up beside them, all round the jungle circle.

"Snakes in a trap, laddie," Monty whispered. "Come ahead."

Shadows tiptoed to the tents, as silently as bare-footed men who have spent their lives acquiring the instinct of not putting a foot in the wrong place.

Monty signaled with his arm. Dembo threw his head back and bellowed like a young bull. Spear blades flashed down on every tent rope. Canvas collapsed in deflated billows. Black men hurled themselves, all arms and legs a-sprawl, onto the heaps. And then arose all the bedlam of Africans in a fight.

Though it was not a fight. It was a capture, literally, of venomous things in the standard form of trap for that purpose. The way to catch a big snake is to smother it under a blanket. The Africans knew the technique; and, as in hunting reptiles, everybody yelled the high excitement of not knowing exactly when and where one might sting. Men who could find no room on top leaped around the edges with ready spears in case a venomous head might wriggle out under a fold.

The surprise was complete. But, smothered, blanketed by clinging canvas, there were still some stings. A pistol cracked muffled under its covering; a red tongue licked out; a man yelled high-pitched above the uproar. The other scrambling shapes on that heap yelled the louder, on a more ferocious note. A spear stabbed through where the tongue had shown.

Davie's gang had the sybaritic tent of the two big white men. Davie sprawled with his black crew; yelled with them. "*Watu huyu zima!*" he yelled ungrammatically. But it was understandable: "This men alive."

The canvas billowed under him; a fury of curses in a gutteral tongue spluttered. Davie rocked as he rode over a

choppy sea. Wherever he felt a protuberance, he hit it. His Africans, having no knowledge of using a fist, kicked with their hard heels.

Enough blows fell upon the proper protuberances at long last to suppress the heavings. African hams squatted upon the flattened heaps that they knew to contain white men and enjoyed the sensation.

Monty came hurrying. "How did you you make out, laddie? Anybody hurt here? The tent that started the shooting is hacked to a hash. Four of Dembo's boys dead. Other tent is alive and wriggling."

"Ransome," Davie panted. "Have ye seen to him?"

"By Jove, no. Come on."

IT WAS Ransome who was the real surprise. Foolish, weak Ransome of whom the opinion was that he wouldn't stick it out. Ransome was sitting up against his wheel, his eyes filmy with a dazed wonder. "I—didn't tell," he croaked and fainted.

Monty knelt beside him, felt him over. "Nothing seems to be broken. But he's fearfully bruised and all played out. Swine! But he'll be all right." He shouted for Gog and Magog. "Find blankets; make a bed; give him water—Come on, laddie, we must get our beasts out before they eat spear. Yours first; they're the dangerous ones."

Literally like extricating a reptile, a corner of the canvas was gingerly lifted, folded cautiously back till a limb was found, the limb dragged at till the rest of the body emerged; the pale face a sick yellow in the lantern light.

"It's the other one. Beastie is still in."

Bubu growled at the inert form. "What 'e deserves is drag 'im where Ransome can kick 'im in the face."

"Right ho, but for the pesky old inhibitions. Let's skin Beastie out and hope he's worse hurt."

Beastie was not. A tough and indomitable man, even in insensibility his aristocracy sneered from his face.

"Tie 'em up, Dembo. Good now. We'll go get the others out."

Dembo grinned in huge good humor. "Oho! You know I know how to tie one fella, Mista Montee."

"Meaning you tied us once?" Monty could grin over that too. "But these fellows mustn't be able to get away and come kick you in the nether pant like we did."

The other tent disgorged five men, small-boned and swarthy. In further distinction from the big blond pair, all of these wore moustaches; about them lingered a faint trace of perfume.

"Officers, by the looks of their uniforms," Monty guessed. "It was the men's tent put up the fight. Jiminy, don't any of these military gents ever put on pajamas to sleep?"

A voice came from where Dembo propelled his captives before him. Arrogant through all of its shakiness and in carefully schooled English.

"Ve demand here that ve shall be treated at once as military prisoners, not like savages."

The pseudo "Beastie" Bellairs said nothing. He must have known there was not much that he could say. Yet despite his bonds, hands tied behind him, he contrived an appearance of cold pride.

The other man repeated his demand—he seemed to be the superior officer.

"You order this—" He surveyed Dembo up and down with an iron control that hid his wonderment. "This clown—you tell him please to release us. Ve do not play here at a masquerade. Ve submit to military guard."

Nobody answered him. They only stared; they turned to look at each other; a sickish sort of expression was on all three faces. Till Davie voiced their common thought in just two words.

"Meelitary prisoners!"

Bubu exploded into lurid speech.

"Gor strike me dead! If that don't save their scaly 'ides!"

HE STRODE to the two tall men—they topped his chunky frame by six inches. His fists poised to smash at their faces; fists that trembled with the force of his restraint. Then he stood away in the futility of despair.

"Military prisoners! And me just

seeing what you done to Ransome! Gor 'elp me! Six constabulary constables murdered cold. So we takes you in to Nairobi. And you—claims—military—law! Aa-argh!"

"Ve invaded British territory," the tall man said very precisely, "in military uniform. Ve captured one prisoner. Ve killed in the engagement six soldiers." The man knew all the rules; he sounded horribly efficient in his bold distortion of facts to fit them.

Beastie Bellairs permitted himself a cold smile of confidence.

"Aye," Davie said heavily. "We would hang for the half of it. But a uniform is a license to official murder."

Bubu choked over their impotence. "So we turns them in and all they gets is internment for the duration. Orficers' internment at that. Orficers and gentlemen!" His fists opened to claw up into the night as though calling for justice from the God whose name he blasphemed so freely.

The tall man was able to expend a thin smile upon his emotion.

"There are too many witnesses for you to do anything else."

"Uniforms!" It dragged from Davie bitterly. "The curse o' them is upon us still. Appurtenances of the De'il and they protect the De'il's own brood." He stood and looked at the prisoners, at all of them all around. The swarthy men had none of the arrogance of the big blonds; their eyes looked away from the grimness that was hardening on Davie's face.

"Aye, uniforms. But there's one small satisfaction left to them yet."

He stepped up to Bellairs. Bellairs' haughty smile faded away from his face as he looked into the jagged granite smile that was growing into Davie's. Davie stepped behind him. He wrapped thick fingers around the bound wrists and twisted him with a jerk that spun him on his heels and brought him up facing Chief Dembo.

"I do not know your name, Beastie, and I will not be fouling my mouth with it. 'Tis enough that I know what ye told me yourself." His voice dropped to rumble judgment out of his chest.

"A soldier salutes the uniform, ye said. Ye will now salute the uniform on Chief Dembo!"

The Beastie stiffened as though he had received a blow of insult in his face. His lips set tight; his chin lifted higher; his eyes glittered hate.

Dembo let out a guffaw. He flung his arms high to shout it out. What a travesty of military pride he was, was beyond his power of appreciation. Burly, black, heavy-browed, he stood at the extreme end of the human scale from an aristocratic caste. A monster in gold braid. He yelled to his followers to come and view this grand performance. They trooped around him, thick-lipped ogres, grinning white teeth in the lantern light. Their decorations of honor winked and clinked on their fine raiment.

"Aye so." Davie's voice grated as harsh as his face, granite pebbles on a rough road that had no turning. "'Tis a proud uniform of your own country, invented by your own meelitary caste, designed for high command. Ye will now salute it, my fine proud man . . . Cut me the lashings to his wrists so that he may properly pairform the honor according to the rules in his book."

His fingers gripped the left wrist as securely as iron claws. A spear blade slipped between the wrists, cut the right hand free.

The proud officer immediately twisted his body around and lashed out at Davie's face.

Davie cuffed him open-handed on the ear, just once.

THE officer's face contorted; his head dropped forward; his knees went loose. It was only Davie's hand on his other wrist that held him up. The effect passed slowly; the knees straightened; the head raised itself, eyes glazed, but stubbornly the neck stiffened.

Davie's voice grated inexorable scripture.

"'He that, being warned, hardeneth his neck, shall be utterly destroyed, and that without remedy.' Ye will now salute."

Davie pushed the left arm up in the excruciating twist that the Beastie had experienced before.

"Sock it to 'im, chum," Bubu exhorted Davie. "It ain't nothing to what 'e did to Ransome. Give 'im another inch."

"Another inch and his arm will go." The strain on Davie's face was as tense as on the Beastie's. His eyes looked away as though to find some means of escape.

"You started it, chum. You got to make 'im do it." Bubu stood as merciless as an inquisitor bent upon saving a man's soul.

Davie bit on his lip; he applied just another fraction of twist. A moist *chuck* sounded in the elbow and suddenly the arm was free to swing all the way up to the man's back hair.

Davie dropped it. He fell away, sick.

Bubu's simmering rage of frustration had burned up his every qualm. He jumped to Davie's place. Without a twinge of compassion he caught up the dislocated arm.

"You took no mercy on Ransome," he gritted. "Salute now, Beastie, or I twist it off."

Military arrogance and pride of race, it seemed, did not have as much power of resistance to pain as did the simple loyalty of a weak Ransome. They broke under the test. The tall blond Aryan officer saluted the uniform on big black buck African Dembo.

Dembo guffawed his delight. His pantomime troop of savages yelled approval.

Bubu let the officer go. The man covered his face with his free hand; his shoulders dropped; he seemed to lose inches in height.

"'Ere, tie 'im up, someone," Bubu said. "You now. It's your turn." He advanced upon the superior officer. "Military court you might get in Nairobi; but in this court you salutes the general staff. Nor I don't let your 'ands loose. You plain bloomin' well kow-tows, same's a Chink."

The supercilious officer had much less resistance than Beastie. He kow-towed. The swarthy little officers had none at all. They kow-towed. Bubu's boot in the exact psychological center of their undignity helped them.

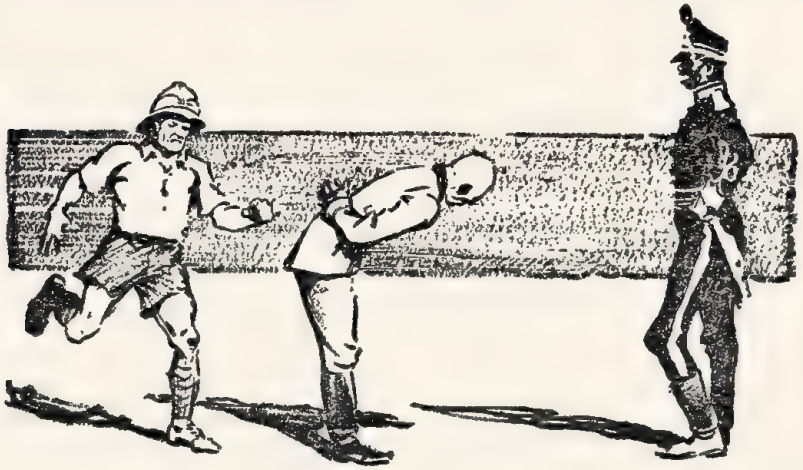
Davie's inherited urge to point the moral was not to be suppressed. With a fine nasal unction worthy of a Scots deacon he said: "Ye will note, Chief Dembo, that 'tis the likes of these people who promised to lead Africa to rebellion against the likes of us—or, haply, better than us. Though," he added self-righteously, "seeing the way we got our necks out o' this noose, I misdoot it."

And a little later he said thoughtfully: "In the matter o' a meelitary court, we must not forget the real engineer Bellairs that these same so confident folk tortured till he died."

And a little later again: "And in the matter o' uniforms, we must not forget that our clever Beastie invaded Nairobi in a uniform not his own, which proves him the spy we suspected all along. A meelitary court now might find there the means o' making justice instead o' internment. What d'ye think?"

Monty expressed his thought in startling religious idiom.

"Amen to that, laddie."



THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

WE WERE delighted to find the letter below in our morning grist of mail one day a few weeks ago. It's exactly what we've been hunting for—brief, succinct, uncompromisingly blunt—to serve as text for a statement of editorial policy we've been wanting to put on the record for some months now.

Miami, Fla.
Feb. 20, 1941

Editor, ADVENTURE
Sir:

I first read your magazine, or started reading it, back in 1922. Haven't missed a copy since. . . . With this issue, March, 1941, I am through reading your magazine. It is too damn British, pro-British. You have three such stories in this issue. They are "The Night the Clocks Stopped," "Sea Power Belongs at Sea," and "Convoy."

Well! I am sick and tired of hearing about the blasted British.

M. D. Beauharnais
French-Canadian

Well, Beauharnais, and everyone else who cares to listen a minute, we happen to think that the corners of the world today where "the blasted British" are making history—on land or sea or in the air—are just about the most fertile backgrounds for redblooded *Adventure* fiction that could be found. And that those same "blasted British," whether in their own isle, above the continent in their Hurricanes and Spitfires, chasing Fascists across East African desert wastes or plowing the seven seas with their navy or merchant marine are among the greatest adventurers of all time.

We're for 'em!

And *Adventure* will continue to print stories about their courageous battle—pro-British stories if you will, but we happen to think such must inevitably be pro-American stories at one and the same time—just so long as our authors write 'em and they stand on their own two feet as *good* stories. *Adventure* is always on the trail of new writing-talent and if Beauharnais can disinter for us a manuscript with a pro-Nazi, pro-Fascist, pro-Axis slant that, after reading, won't leave a stench in our nostrils and a retch in our throat—

Well, until that time we'll continue to give you such "blasted British" as Peter Dickoe of the Daly stories, Gordon MacCreagh's Honorable Monty, Leslie T. White's Lieutenant Cromwell—along with such "blasted Americans" as the hero of "Destroyer for England" in this issue, Jeffrey Wynn and a vast company of similar spirits who are pitching in to help their own kind in the common cause. We'll even hope to give you some of Beauharnais' Canadian neighbors, most of whom seem to have a slightly less warped slant on things!

AND speaking of "Destroyer for England," Durand Kiefer who wrote the tale—his first to appear in our magazine—sounds as if he'd be a fit character himself to build a yarn around. He says—

Biographically speaking: I'm 35 this month, and have spent the last fifteen years in the Navy, counting the four years at the Naval Academy from which I graduated in '30. Went there in the first place because I'd spent the previous fifteen years knocking around the Great Lakes in my father's boats, sailing out of my home town of Port Huron, Mich., and this gave me the idea that I wanted to be a sailor. As Ensign and Lieutenant in the Navy, did duty on practically all types of naval vessels on all stations from Guantanamo, Cuba, to Tsingtao,

China, where my eldest son (of three) was born in '34 and where I contracted stomach trouble which has finally, just this year, landed me on the retired list for "physical disability." But I always wanted to write, anyway, and find the work more comfortable, if harder, than seafaring. Biggest thrill in the Navy was commanding an old 1000 ton 1800 H. P. steam tug on Puget Sound for a year, and especially the one month, 5000 mile trip I took her on to the outer Aleutian Islands in February of '38 to rescue the members of an aerological station on Kanaga Island when their supply ship, the minesweeper *Swallow*, piled up on the rocks off the island. The tug, *Tatnuck*, hadn't been out of the Sound in ten years and I left on five days' notice. The story of that trip was published in *Pacific Motor Boat* under the title of "To Hell and Back." Also, as a result, I hold a Master's License for any tonnage, any ocean. Have published other stories in *The American Boy*, *The Boy's World*, and *Our Navy* since last fall when I first turned to fiction.

We've asked him to let us have a copy of the publication containing "To Hell and Back" and will try to give you a little more detail of that voyage after we've read it. All he's done is whet our curiosity.

SHERMAN BAKER, who writes of Aubry's famous ride, also makes his first appearance in *Adventure* this month. He says, by way of introduction—

I was born in Norfolk, Virginia, have lived in the West Indies, France and England, and have travelled in South America. I intended to study medicine, and matriculated at Jefferson Medical School, but got sidetracked. Among other things, I have been an ordinary seaman, prospector, and Government clerk. I am a graduate of the University of Arizona, and am at present engaged in research and writing on Southwestern subjects.

The Southwest fascinates me. My wife and I live in an abandoned Forest Service Ranger Station hidden among the hackberry trees in one of the most remote and interesting parts of Arizona —the Dragoon Mountains. We both write. When we go to town (Tucson is eighty-five miles away), we have to bounce over nearly forty miles of bad mountain road before we come to a paved road. We have no telephone and no radio, and our nearest neighbor is three miles away. We wouldn't trade places with anybody.

I have been published in *Natural History*, *Desert Magazine*, etc., and have had a number of stories and articles under my own name and pseudonyms in various Western fiction magazines.

That sounds like "getting away from it all" with a vengeance. We have a sneaking suspicion, times being what they are, that if we ever found ourselves in a phoneless, radioless, neighborless spot we wouldn't trade places with anybody either.

F. R. BUCKLEY'S Caradosso stories, perennially popular in *Adventure* for more than fifteen years, though set in an age now dusted by the mould of four centuries, continue to be as modern as ever in their flavor and implication. The author appended the following note to "Of Penitence" and we are glad to pass it along to you.

Preaching against the sins of tyrants never has been the safest of occupations; but history seems to show that it was less risky in sixteenth-century Italy than it is today. For instance, the Ferrarese friar Savonarola, going to Florence, insulted Lorenzo de' Medici in life and on his deathbed, and continued to accuse commoners of vanity, merchants of usury, and the reigning family of various crimes and misdemeanors for nine years before he was hanged. He might have continued indefinitely, it seems, had he not turned his oratory against the corruption of the Church under the terrible Borgia Pope Alexander VI.

Another preacher, Benedetto da Foiano, had a similar career, terminated by a similar imprudence. Thirty years after Savonarola, he too preached against the Medici in Florence (of which city he, like Savonarola, was not a native) and was done to death, not by them but by Pope Clement VII; imprisoned in the Castel S. Angelo in Rome and scientifically starved to death. Benvenuto Cellini later occupied this unhappy cleric's cell; his *Autobiography* describes it as "the deepest of the subterranean dungeons."

For laymen, criticism of the great was considerably more hazardous; one recalls the case of the man who slandered Cesare Borgia in a Roman pot-house. Without

trial, he was deprived of his right hand and half his tongue, and the *disjecta membra*, with a notice explaining them, were nailed to the tavern door. The slander was, however, quite unprintable; and as a standard of comparative severity, it is to be noted that about the same time, a man was hanged in Florence for cutting the tassels off citizens' clothes at a *fiesta*.

Tassels were one of the vanities against which Savonarola preached; false hair (made of yellow silk) was another; pictures of nude ladies, make-up for living ones, exaggerated puffings and slashings of men's clothes were other objects of his denunciations. So effective were his sermons, that people brought their "vanities" and made huge bonfires of them in the public square—where the friar's own body was later to be burned; moreover he forced Lorenzo the Magnificent "to restore, or direct his heirs to restore, his ill-gotten gains." In the stopping of usury he was not so successful—a previous preacher, Bernardino da Feltre, had been banished for attacking this institution, forty years before; and even today there are those who hold that the "crime" for which Savonarola suffered was not blasphemy but bolshevism. The Medici themselves were merchants and bankers in a large way; their coat-of-arms surviving until quite recently, when prosperity abolished pawnshops. Or, at least, caused them to resemble banks.

Behind the gigantic and tragic figure of Fra Girolamo, and for long before and after his time, there were numbers of friars tramping Italy — Dominicans, mostly—denouncing any worldlinesses they encountered on their way. Punning on themselves as *domini canes*—"the hounds of God"—they prided themselves on keen noses for sin, and complete fearlessness in giving tongue. And it would seem that it was only in later years, when they began to be *less* fearless, that disaster overtook them, and that tyrant-cursing became really dangerous. Which is something we might think over nowadays.

Lest the friar in the story—denouncing false noses—be considered over-severe, I would remark that Burchard, in his *Diarium* as Papal Master of Ceremonies, describes these disguises in words which have to be left in the original Latin, and are better not quoted at that. It was not an age of delicate humor; nor of over-gentle joking. Giovio, in his Life of Cardinal Colonna, remarks that the highest ambition of a spirited young noble was to kill the *bargello*—the local chief of police; and tells how one Pietro Mangano "acquired great fame and popularity" by doing just that. The idea survived into eighteenth-century England, when the favorite sport of young gentlemen in drink was "boxing the watch" or "milling the Charlies;" and probably cop-fighting would be considered funny here and now, but for the invention of firearms.

As regards weapons in the story—the young lieutenant, firing his two guns simultaneously (or trying to do so) seems to have been experimenting with the idea of chain-shot, which was of course improved and made practicable as civilization advanced. At the time of our own Civil War, some bright Southerner conceived the notion of consolidating two guns into one, and actually produced a double-barreled cannon. It was duly tested, but proved unsatisfactory; it was never used in action and is now, I believe, in a museum.

AS LONG as we're on the subject *of penitence* we see no reason why we shouldn't hail Artist Singer, who painted our March cover, onto the spot with us here and join us in confessing the error of our ways—at least so far as the behavior of pig-boats is concerned. If you recall, the cover showed a naval officer peering through the eyepiece of a submarine's periscope. At least that's what we thought it showed! When Commander Ellsberg brought the ms. of "Captain Paul" into the office we thought we'd get an expert's opinion on our cover, for if anyone knows submarines the Commander does. (Remember "On the Bottom" and "Men Below the Sea" among others?) The Commander took one look and said "What is it?" or words to that effect. When we explained (imagine *us* explaining to *him* about a submarine!) we soon learned why he hadn't been able to spot it as such. It was the angle at which the periscope was canted. Seems the mechanical detail of the 'scope—handles, eyepiece, bolts and screws and such—were correct enough but the boat would only be rolling at such an angle provided she was on the surface and in a rough sea. In which case the periscope

(Continued on page 124)

(Continued from page 8)

ment. Kerosene, stove, refrigerator, heater. Electric lighting—if you had an inboard motor for your power, batteries would store up the electricity. The oil lamps are still standard on shantyboats —but if you are cruising on the Lakes, I should prefer a cruiser, fitted with conveniences rather than conveniences fitted with a shantyboat scow hull.

Motor Boat, 63 Beekman St., New York city, and Ruddy, 9 Murray st., New York city both print occasional houseboat articles, and examination of these would help you shape your hull. I've cruised on the Great Lakes in a rowboat, and spent a lot of time in shantyboats and powerboats and land cruising, and from your viewpoint I'm sure you would be satisfied with your tonnage of outfit in a hull not at all adapted for cruising.

Considering the amount of your investment I think it would pay you to look over houseboats along Hudson river and perhaps consult a marine architect used to designing houseboats and home-comfort yachts. You could build a small houseboat, 24-ft long by 7 ft or so wide, and after living aboard it, for a while, with a stove, bunks, and outboard motor, and minimum outfit, make sure of what you really need and then build accordingly. I think a 10 ton craft ought to be a whole lot more boat than the make-shift hull "14 x 30" feet implies, and a hull and cabin deserve as much consideration as you've given the equipment.

YOU can't shoot silently any more.

Request:—1. Where may I buy a silencer for a rifle? About what will it cost? What are the laws which prohibits its use and where may I be able to read them?

2. If they are not for sale where may I get a plan of their construction so I may make one?

3. If you were me and were saving to buy a gun for vermin and pests would you buy the .220 Swift in the standard model or would you get the Super Model? What Modern priced Telescope Would you advise to go with it or Would you use Lyman 48 WJS peep sights on it?

4. What are all the tools necessary for the reloading of shells. I have looked in catalogs and they list so many I must be confused. Please tell me the name of the tools necessary for the complete job of reloading from a shot shell and in A No. 1 shape. And about the price of some of the sets from some reliable companies.

—Gerald V. Harris
Randolph Field, Tex.

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—1st. Silencers for firearms are outlawed by the Government, and none are to had any more, anywhere or at any price. It would even be illegal for me to describe the manufacture of one to you, so I'm sure you will pardon me for omitting this reply;

2nd. See above. The Federal Firearms Act will be apt to be the article to read for details on the Governments stand on these articles;

3rd. Were I purchasing a .220 Swift, I'd get the standard model, as fancy checking and such, adds nothing to the arms real accuracy. I'd rather put more money in ammunition than in the rifles appearance, myself.

For scope sights, the Lyman Alaskan, the Noske Field Scope, or the 330 Weaver are all used by shooting friends of mine, and all are highly satisfactory to the users, I hear. I prefer the Lyman 48 receiver sight to any other I have used for bolt action rifles of the higher power loadings. I even prefer it to a scope, as I seem to get eyestrain with any scope I ever have used. But other men, better rifle shots than I swear by the scope sight. It's just a matter of personal choice, but you will surely get more shots at vermin at long range by using the scope;

4th. For reloading outfits, and advice on their use, I advise letters to the two following firms, makers of reloading tools, and authors of fine handbooks on their use;

The Lyman Gunsight Corp., Ideal Tool Div., Middlefield, Ct.;

The Pacific Gunsight Corp., 356 Hayes St., San Francisco, Cal.

Send each fifty cents for the handbook. is my advice; it's well worth it. And READ the book well, before doing any reloading, particularly of high power ammunition. Personally, for a hunting rifle, I'd take the .30 '06 every time before the .220 Swift. But there's no questioning the accuracy of the latter for 200 yards on a still day.

DO THE DEAD RETURN?

A strange man in Los Angeles, known as "The Voice of Two Worlds," tells of astonishing experiences in far-off and mysterious Tibet, often called the land of miracles by the few travelers permitted to visit it. Here he lived among the lamas, mystic priests of the temple. "In your previous lifetime," a very old lama told him, "you lived here, a lama in this temple. You and I were boys together. I lived on, but you died in youth, and were reborn in England. I have been expecting your return."

The young Englishman was amazed as he looked around the temple where he was believed to have lived and died. It seemed uncannily familiar, he appeared to know every nook and corner of it, yet—at least in this lifetime—he had never been there before. And mysterious was the set of circumstances that had brought him. Could it be a case of reincarnation, that strange belief of the East that souls return to earth again and again, living many lifetimes?

Because of their belief that he had formerly been a lama in the temple, the lamas welcomed the young man with open arms and taught him rare mysteries and long-hidden practices, closely guarded for three thousand years by the sages, which have enabled many to perform amazing feats. He says that the system often leads to almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind, can be used to achieve brilliant business and professional success as well as great happiness. The young man himself later became a noted explorer and geographer, a successful publisher of maps and atlases of the Far East, used throughout the world.

"There is in all men a sleeping giant of mindpower," he says. "When awakened, it can make man capable of surprising feats, from the prolonging of youth to success in many other worthy endeavors." The system is said by many to promote improvement in health; others tell of increased bodily strength, courage and poise.

"The time has come for this long-hidden system to be disclosed to the Western world," declares the author, and offers to send his amazing 9000 word treatise—which reveals many startling results—to sincere readers of this publication, free of cost or obligation. For your free copy, address the Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. 60-T, Los Angeles, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed.

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"ALL STORIES NEW—NO REPRINTS"

(Continued from page 121)

would not need to be used for observation. If the sub were below the surface, where the 'scope *would* be used, she'd be on an even keel and not heeled over the way the picture had been painted. All clear? We made our apologies to the Commander at the time and take this opportunity of being humble before others more familiar with the foibles of submersibles than we are. Artist Singer says: "Why couldn't the ship be out of commission, on the bottom just far enough down for the periscope to be sticking above the water, canted over on an irregular bar or reef, and the guy in the picture looking around to see if help is coming?" We thought this was a highly specious attempt to slide out of a nasty predicament and would have none of it!

NEWSPAPERS on March 7 carried dispatches from Santiago reporting that the Chilean Naval Department had been informed that cannon fire had been heard in the Straits of Magellan. The Chilean naval wireless station suggested it might have been thunder (a touch of the williwaw?) but it was pointed out that the Straits are the only logical route for Nazi sea-raiders (the *Admiral Schneider?)* to transfer from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The cannonading came from the neighborhood of Dungeness Lighthouse on the Straits.

The above, just in case anyone thought L. T. W.'s new serial was the sheer flight of a fictioneer's fancy without much basis in the actualities.

WE'VE been getting a great kick out of reading Luke Short's current serial in the SEP, "Blood on the Moon." We think it's far and away the best thing he's done since "The Feud at Single Shot"—"Rustler's Range"—"Spy of the North," those swell serials *Adventure's* been running for the past five years. And we got an extra special kick out of the unembarrassed editorial euphemism in the "Keeping Posted" column of the March 15th issue wherein the Post announced its "discovery" of Short and introduced him to its read-

(Continued on page 130)

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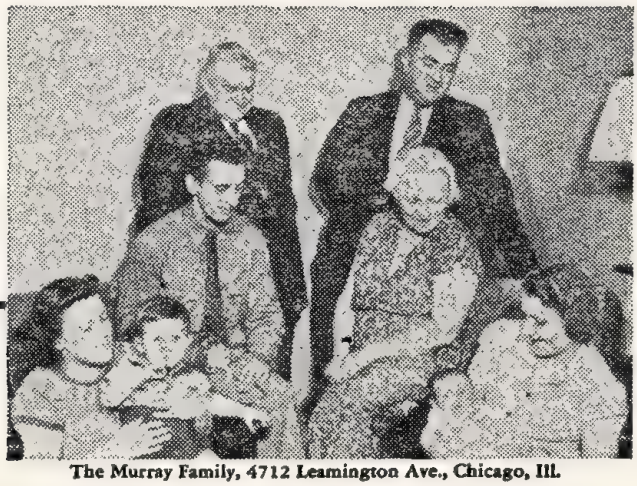

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30x4.50-21	1.95	.85
28x4.75-19	1.85	.95
29x4.75-20	2.10	.85
29x5.00-19	2.25	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.40	1.05
6.25-17	2.45	1.15
28x5.25-18	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.45	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.50	1.15
31x5.25-21	2.60	1.15
6.50-17	2.75	1.15
28x5.50-18	2.75	1.15
29x5.50-19	2.75	1.15
6.00-16	3.15	1.45
6.00-17	2.85	1.15
30x6.00-18	2.95	1.15
31x6.00-19	2.85	1.15
32x6.00-20	2.95	1.25
33x6.00-21	3.10	1.25
32x6.50-20	3.20	1.35

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6.50-20	3.35	1.95
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Editor's Note:—A gentle admonition seems to be in order, directed at a few thoughtless readers who have been deluging A.A. experts lately with questions that they obviously can't answer and wouldn't if they could. We want you to use this department but please don't **abuse** it. For instance—we thought everybody knew the world was at war but apparently the man who wrote an African expert asking for detailed information on how to take up land and "homestead" in Ethiopia is living in some other planet. Then there was the ardent philatelist who wrote the identical letter to all our foreign experts asking for sets of stamps from the country each represented. "Information you can't get elsewhere" reads the subhead at the beginning of the department. Requests, such as one expert got, for a detailed article on "all phases of life, customs, history, natural resources, etc." (it was that "etc." that floored our expert) just don't play fair with our service. Most of what the inquirer wanted could have been had in any encyclopedia but he just didn't bother to look. It was easier to write. Let us repeat—we want you to use *Ask Adventure* but please use a little discretion in so doing.

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(Continued on page 128)

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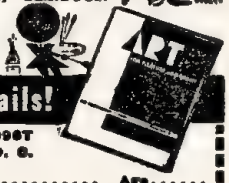

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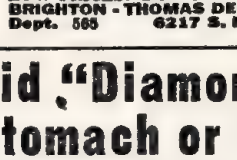

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(Continued from page 127)

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edw. H. S., Vancouver, B. C.

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★**New Guinea**—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure*.

★**New Zealand: Cook Island, Samoa**—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

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Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Hawaii Equal Rights Comm., Honolulu, Hawaii.

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THE CAMP-FIRE

(Continued from page 124)

ers. "Where, we asked ourselves, has this Luke Short been hiding himself?" the conductor of the column says. Well, the answer of course is that he hasn't been hiding and the SEP knew about him all the time. Knew about him just as thoroughly as we knew about Bob Case, for instance, whose "Freeze and Be Damned!" just finished in our May issue and which we announced, when it was about to start back in February, as the best thing Case had done since "Wings North" which, as you may recall, ran in SEP not so long ago. Knew about Short just as thoroughly as it knew about MacKinlay Kantor, Steve Fisher, R. V. Gery, Leslie T. White, L. G. Blochman—we could go on *ad infinitum,* proving nothing of course, except that SEP like any other magazine that's on the ball has to watch its contemporaries as writing talent grows and develops. And just to make sure SEP stays right in there pitching hard we're seeing that *Adventure* gets sent to Philadelphia every publication date from now on.—K. S. W.

LOST TRAILS

(Continued from page 6)

My twin brother, Donald J. Smith, 24 yrs. old, disappeared in August, 1940. He is 5 ft. 11 in. tall, weighs 135 lbs., light brown hair, very crooked teeth, neither drinks nor smokes. Wears glasses constantly. Please get in touch with Pvt. David E. Smith, Co. E, 19th Engineers, Fort Ord, Calif.

Earnestly wish to locate a buddy who was my constant companion for four years of service in the United States Army: Leslie D. Smith. He left the Philippine Islands in July, 1940, was to return to his home in Wisconsin. Last heard from at Fort McDowell, California, August, 1940. Notify Dale C. Schwartz, Box 476, Jamestown, N. Dak.

Lost Trails, ADVENTURE
Dear Sirs:

In regard to a notice, published in the April issue, of ADVENTURE concerning Leslie D. Smith, I have contacted him. I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for a very great service. May ADVENTURE have ever greater success.

Sincerely yours,
Dale C. Schwartz,
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Many men think they are "stalled" when actually they are just sidetracked because their real ability is disguised by ill-fitting, "ordinary work clothes". The remedy's simple.

You can have that smart, get-ahead appearance with popular Lee "promotion clothes". They draw favorable attention to you and your work at no extra cost per month of wear and with a big plus in both pride and comfort!

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Don't wait. Start with Lee now. You can't lose because every Lee is guaranteed to look better, fit better, last longer—or your money back! See your Lee dealer. Mail the coupon.

UNION-MADE

Lee

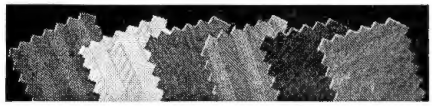
TAILORED SIZES

SANFORIZED-SHRUNK

*Fabric Shrinkage Less Than 1%.

COLOR-MATCHED SHIRTS & PANTS ✓
OVERALLS ✓ . . . *Genuine Jelt Denim*
UNION-ALLS ✓ . . *with the Hinge Back*
DUNGAREES ✓ **SHOP COATS ✓**

FREE! Mail Coupon Now!



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☐ **Overalls** ☐ **Union-All** ☐ **Whipcords** ☐ **Shirts & Pants**

Name_____

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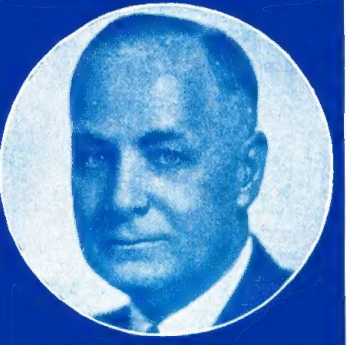
I tramped the Streets HUNGRY, BROKE, WEARY

FINALLY LANDED JOB PLAYING A PIANO IN SALOON FOR EATS AND SLEEPS Then -



I MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY!

AND NOW?

WELL, I LIVE IN A $25,000 HOME, DRIVE A BEAUTIFUL CADILLAC LIMOUSINE, HAVE MONEY IN THE BANK, AND HAVE WON INTERNATIONAL FAME AND FORTUNE.

YOU, TOO, CAN HAVE ALL THESE THINGS & MORE IF YOU USE THE POWER I USE - - !

READ WHAT THOSE WHO USE THIS POWER EVERY DAY, SAY...

1. DEBTS PAID, BUSINESS INCREASES, HEALTH IMPROVES:
"My health has improved very much. My business, which was almost gone, has shown a steady increase, and the debts are getting paid faster than I ever dreamed possible."

2. MILLIONAIRE COTTON IMPORTER WRITES:
"No words of mine can adequately express the glorious thrill it gave me. I sat up till one o'clock this morning reading it. The thought of being able to actually talk with God fairly took my breath away, as you said it would. It is impossible in a letter to show my appreciation." *Signed*—G. P. Birley.

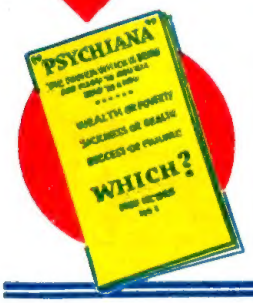
3. WORLD-FAMOUS PHYSICIAN WRITES:
"Your conception of truth which not only can make, but will make the world free, is the greatest flashlight of liberty I have ever read." *Signed*—Dr. M. Rose, M.D., C.M., N.D. Former Asst. Surgeon to Queen Victoria.

4. TOMMY BURNS,
EX-HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD WRITES:
"The mighty God-Power of the universe is working wonders for me. I hope to have another world's champion in time. I'll have the Power of the universe behind me."

WHAT WAS THE STARTLING DISCOVERY I MADE?

Well, I discovered that the whole human race can draw freely upon the invisible Power which is God, and, drawing freely upon that Power, find that it responds in an almost miraculous manner, bringing to all, whatever things they need to make their lives abundantly happy and prosperous here and now. I discovered that there are absolutely no limitations to the amazing Power of God.

ABSOLUTELY FREE TO YOU



I HAVE WRITTEN MY DRAMATIC STORY IN TWO BOOKLETS. THESE BOOKLETS ARE FREE TO ALL WHO ASK FOR THEM. SIMPLY FILL IN THE FORM TO THE RIGHT, SIGNING YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PLAINLY, AND YOUR REQUEST WILL BE HONORED AT ONCE. REMEMBER — THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CHARGE FOR THESE TWO BOOKLETS. NOR IS ANY OTHER OBLIGATION INCURRED BY SENDING FOR THEM. I THINK YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT THIS IS THE GREATEST DISCOVERY MAN HAS EVER MADE.

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Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 709, Moscow, Idaho

The sooner you send the coupon the sooner you receive the booklets.

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